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ABSTRACT

As part of Maryland's performance accountability process, public colleges and universities have had to develop a plan for the assessment of undergraduate student learning outcomes and submit annual progress reports to the Maryland Higher Education Commission. This report includes highlights of the submissions from each of the 13 public four-year institutions and 16 community colleges as well as the unedited executive summaries of the reports prepared by each institution. Campuses were asked to indicate how assessment of student learning affected the educational process at the institution and how selected academic programs changed or improved as a result of the assessment of student learning outcomes. The only common learning outcomes measure used by all institutions is participation in the biennial follow-up survey of graduates 1 year after graduation. Institutions use a variety of other surveys and data to assess their learning outcomes. State-mandated learning outcomes assessment has become a continuous process of self-reflection leading to change and improvement. Institutions across the state used similar language in their reports to indicate their belief in the usefulness of learning outcomes assessment, but Maryland colleges and universities are at different stages of developing assessment systems. Appendix 1 describes the reporting guidelines, and the second appendix contains two summary tables. Appendix 3 contains a synopsis of the results of student learning outcomes assessment at the institutional and programmatic levels by school. (SLD)

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MARYLAND HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

# 2001 Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Reports

## Maryland Public Colleges and Universities

**October 2001**

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**2001-RES-12**

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## Background

As part of the State's performance accountability process prior to 1996, Maryland's public colleges and universities had to develop a plan for the assessment of undergraduate student learning outcomes and to submit annual progress reports to the Maryland Higher Education Commission. However, a new accountability system adopted by the Commission in 1996 gave the governing boards of the public campuses primary responsibility for monitoring student learning outcomes, although the Commission retained the option of seeking progress reports on this subject.

The Commission asked the Secretary of Higher Education to work with the heads of the public sectors to develop a formal reporting schedule for the submission of these status reports. Agreement was reached that the public campuses would provide the Commission with a report on their progress in improving student learning, instructional effectiveness, and curriculum every three years beginning in 1998.

The 2001 reports followed a common format agreed to by both representatives of the public higher education sectors and the Commission staff. These guidelines are contained in Appendix I. Campuses were asked to address two general questions:

- How has assessment of student learning affected the educational process at their institution? Campuses were allowed to use information prepared for their Middle States accreditation review to prepare their answers.
- How have selected academic programs been changed or improved as a result of the assessment of student learning outcomes?

Progress reports were received from each Maryland public college and university. They described their engagement in a number of activities to evaluate learning outcomes and student success. While all of the reports indicated strong institutional commitment to assessment, only those activities directly related to measuring student learning outcomes will be discussed. The following analysis includes highlights of the submissions, as well as the unedited executive summaries of the reports prepared by each institution.

## Summary

Student learning outcomes assessment is well underway at public institutions of higher education in Maryland. In this year's reports, all campuses asserted that assessment is vital to their core missions. Most have incorporated the assessment of student learning into their strategic plans and have created positions, offices, and/ or teams to coordinate the effort. Virtually all Maryland colleges and universities reported that student learning outcomes assessment has been driving curricular and programmatic reform. All stated that the ultimate goal of these initiatives has been to improve student learning.

### *Methods Used to Assess Student Learning Outcomes in Maryland*

A "learning outcome" is generally defined as evidence of improvement in capabilities or knowledge as a result of education. As described in their reports, public higher education institutions across Maryland are measuring the learning outcomes of their students by a variety of methods. These include the following:

- "Value-added" proficiency test results (measures improvement over time)
- Proficiency test pass rates
  - Basic skills (communication, problem-solving, and critical thinking)
  - Knowledge and skills required of a particular major
  - Licensure and certification exams
  - Graduate admission exams (four-year college graduates)
- Student papers, projects, and oral presentations by graduating seniors
- Portfolio assessment of graduating seniors
- Capstone courses for graduating seniors
- Embedded assessment (incorporated into the course curriculum at all levels)
- Surveys and interviews
  - Of students at all levels, regarding participation in educational activities correlated with learning
  - Of graduating seniors, regarding opinions of their educational experience
  - Of alumni, regarding post-graduate employment and education, and their opinions of their educational experience at the institution
  - Of employers, regarding the quality and skills of graduates employed by them

The only common learning outcomes measure used by every institution in Maryland is participation in the biennial follow-up survey of graduates one year after graduation coordinated by the Maryland Higher Education Commission. Many institutions also administer their own alumni surveys annually or have expanded the scope of those surveyed to include alumni several years following graduation. In addition to specific learning outcomes measures, all schools annually examine retention and graduation rates based on data obtained from the Commission.

For an understanding of the assessment methods that are currently being used by each Maryland public college and university, please refer to Appendix I (Table 1 presents data for the public four-year campuses; Table 2, for the community colleges).

*Effects of Learning Outcomes Assessment on Institutions*

For public colleges and universities in Maryland, state-mandated learning outcomes assessment has become a continuous process of self-reflection leading to change and improvement. To quote the Bowie State University report, "...the outcomes assessment process supports the collection, analyses, interpretation, and documentation of information to verify the University's achievement of its missions, goals, and objectives." According to the report from Carroll Community College, the "...true goal of learning outcomes assessment is to improve the student learning process."

Institutions across the State used similar language in their reports to indicate their belief in the usefulness of learning outcomes assessment. They are at varying stages of developing assessment systems, however. For example, University of Baltimore and Cecil Community College have just recently recognized the need to develop campus-wide assessment plans. Other schools are in the initial coordination phase and have been devoting significant resources to faculty development in learning outcomes assessment philosophy and methods. Two examples:

- Allegany College of Maryland *(faculty participated in workshops on learning models prior to developing assessment methods)*
- Carroll Community College *(faculty development has focused on learning outcomes assessment in general, as well as on detailed topics such as the neurology of the learning process and methods of assessing written work)*

Many institutions have had learning assessment programs in place for some time; at these campuses, the effort is well integrated and affects classroom, departmental, and administrative processes. The report of University of Maryland-Baltimore County (UMBC) refers to this integration as "...the iterative process of assessment, evaluation, planning, prioritizing, and budgeting." Some schools, in addition to assessing learning, have also been busy evaluating and improving the ways in which they assess learning:

- St. Mary's College of Maryland *(evaluating the "St. Mary's Project" and exploring whether it should be required of all graduating students)*
- Howard Community College *(evaluated the "Writing Across the Curriculum" program assessment methods to develop new, universal assessment norms)*

- University of Maryland University College and Frederick Community College *(both award faculty grants to research and improve learning outcomes methods; projects are underway to study writing assessment methods and pre/post test programs).*

*Effects of Learning Outcomes Assessment on Academic Programs*

At the academic program level, most colleges and universities began using learning outcomes assessment to improve programs in the occupational disciplines (nursing or information technologies, for example). This is mainly because learning outcomes assessment has been integral to these programs in the form of licensure and certification exams, as well as accreditation by professional bodies. Examples include:

- Anne Arundel Community College, Baltimore City Community College, College of Southern Maryland, Frederick Community College, Harford Community College, and University of Maryland, Baltimore *(Nursing licensure exam results led to revised curriculum to improve critical thinking skills of nursing students)*
- Bowie State *(Praxis I exam results led to Education Department curriculum changes and the creation of a Praxis computer lab for exam preparation)*
- Towson University *(to insure accreditation by the Computer Science Accreditation Commission, the computer science program expanded its curriculum to include more required computer science courses and a speech communication course).*

Recently, some institutions have applied a learning outcomes-driven philosophy to other programs as well. For example, many have reviewed and revamped general education requirements, establishing the "core competencies" required of all graduates, and defining standard methods to measure student learning. Several community colleges (Anne Arundel, Carroll, Community College of Baltimore County, Garrett, Hagerstown, Harford, Prince Georges, and the College of Southern Maryland) have established "core competencies"; at the four-year level, UMBC and Salisbury have done so. Stated basic learning requirements are similar, but reflect the individual values and mission of each institution.

Some institutions have designed cyclical program review systems in which every program or major is evaluated on a regular schedule, with learning outcomes used as key criteria. Among the community colleges, these include the Community College of Baltimore County, Chesapeake, Frederick, Harford, Hagerstown, and Howard. Among the four-year public institutions, these include Bowie State, Coppin State, Frostburg State, Salisbury, St. Mary's, Towson, UMBC, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, and University of Maryland College Park. Illustrative of these cyclical reviews is the example of Frostburg State: in its Periodic Program Review process,

each department must evaluate all of its programs on a specified schedule, according to criteria which includes an assessment of student technology fluency as well as other student learning outcomes, in relation to each program's educational objectives.

In addition to monitoring learning outcomes measures, some institutions have set benchmarks using national and/ or local norms. Garrett Community College and Prince George's Community College have established systems by which any measurements not meeting the benchmark triggers an automatic program review.

The following is a brief synopsis of the results of student learning outcomes assessment at the institutional and programmatic levels, by school. A description of campus activities is in Appendix III, which includes the verbatim executive summaries of the institutions' reports. The full reports are available upon request from the Commission staff.

*Four-Year Colleges and Universities*

Bowie State University

- Institutional affects: grant-funded Office of Outcomes Assessment was established; under its leadership, all academic departments have developed and implemented outcomes assessment plans.
- Programmatic affects: the English Department now uses six proficiency exams and has established benchmarks for each. The first year of data revealed low pass rates on one of the exams, causing review of the English curriculum.

Coppin State College

- Institutional affects: the Academic Program Review Committee was reactivated; assurance of technology fluency is now required of all programs; all candidates for graduation must take department-specific exit exams.
- Programmatic affects: the Division of Education recently designed a performance assessment system to assure continuous quality improvement.

Frostburg State University

- Institutional affects: results of pre/post (freshman/senior) tests on improvement in communications and critical thinking skills have led to faculty training on teaching methods for increasing critical thinking skills and to consideration of implementing a "writing across the curriculum" program.
- Programmatic affects: the College of Education is implementing programmatic assessment plans focusing on learning outcomes; high standards recognized by the state, professional associations, and NCATE have been instituted.

Salisbury University

- Institutional affects: periodic program review format and process redesigned; faculty-defined review criteria are now more stringent and department-specific.
- Programmatic affects: the General Education Task Force has proposed two models for the revision of general education; both are assessment-driven.

Towson University

- Institutional affects: University Assessment Council helped develop assessment requirements for all new program proposals; every three years, a Majors Assessment Report with Student Performance Data is required of every major.
- Programmatic affects: based on assessment feedback, the Speech Pathology program defined stronger program goals, added lectures on writing style, strengthened writing requirements, added group collaboration projects, and established a student computer lab and an instructional web site.

University of Baltimore

- Institutional affects: development of a college-wide assessment plan is underway. Student survey results have led to programs being developed to increase student/ faculty interaction.
- Programmatic affects: in the History program, surveys of students and alumni have led to changes in course sequencing and to greater emphasis on applied courses, as well as the introduction of new courses.

University of Maryland, Baltimore

- Institutional affects: results of employer satisfaction surveys led to new program development and to curriculum changes emphasizing the mastery of a wider range of skills and a broader knowledge base.
- Programmatic affects: results of Nursing licensure exams have led to a focus on the improvement of students' critical thinking skills.

University of Maryland, Baltimore County

- Institutional affects: learning outcomes assessment is integrated into the strategic planning process; entire campus (including faculty, staff, students, and administrators) has been engaged in a major self-assessment study for the past three years.
- Programmatic affects: portfolio reviews of Visual Arts majors led to discussions regarding the mission of the department and needed curriculum changes.

University of Maryland, College Park

- Institutional affects: Campus Assessment Working Group has begun a detailed analysis of learning outcomes; a committee of faculty, students, and staff has been appointed to develop the institutional outcomes assessment plan.
- Programmatic affects: undergraduate Physics program enrollment declines led faculty to undertake a program review resulting in curriculum changes and the addition of new, cross-discipline programs.

University of Maryland, Eastern Shore

- Institutional affects: a faculty-centered campus-wide assessment advisory committee has been established; all degree programs are required to formulate an assessment plan.
- Programmatic affects: pass rates of English Proficiency Exam resulted in the development of a "writing across the curriculum" program and a review of Developmental English courses.

University of Maryland, University College

- Institutional affects: undergraduate division has established a worldwide assessment committee emphasizing the importance of learning outcomes assessment across the curriculum; a grants program was begun to support

faculty research, particularly in learning outcomes assessment, and several such projects are underway.

- Programmatic affects: an extensive undergraduate program self-study has led to restructuring the degree program from one of "academic specializations" to one of "majors in the academic disciplines".

Morgan State University

- Institutional affects: results from alumni and employers' surveys have led to general improvements in student services.
- Programmatic affects: all departments administer a comprehensive exam at the conclusion of the major's senior year; in order to graduate, students must score 70 or better (effects on programs not specified).

St. Mary's College of Maryland

- Institutional affects: Campus wide Assessment Committee formed. Based on student and faculty feedback, well-established learning outcomes assessment methods (St. Mary's project and Portfolio Session Sorting) are being refined.
- Programmatic affects: in response to self-study, the Psychology Department will implement a diversity requirement to its curriculum, and the Psychology Introductory course will be enhanced with in-class demonstrations.

*Community Colleges*

Allegany College of Maryland

- Institutional affects: based on results of their survey of employers, a faculty team is revising core competencies required to meet employers' needs.
- Programmatic affects: the R.N. Nursing program, as a result of self-study, revised educational outcomes to better reflect the program philosophy, revised syllabi and textbooks, added new courses, updated the library, and purchased computer-assisted software for testing preparation.

Anne Arundel Community College

- Institutional affects: outcome Assessment Team for Student Success instituted a competencies-based assessment-as-learning model; all new courses and programs must now submit description of learning outcomes assessment plan using standardized templates
- Programmatic affects: the Physician Assistant program, as a result of student surveys and focus groups, rearranged the curriculum, initiated more frequent faculty/ student meetings, and clarified attendance policies.

Baltimore City Community College

- Institutional affects: the Strategic Plan includes an institutional goal of increasing the GED exam pass rate of students who have taken the GED Prep course, from 52% in 2000 to 60%.
- Programmatic affects: results of pre/post testing of Nursing students has led to faculty training in instruction methods to increase critical thinking skills.

Carroll Community College

- Institutional affects: comprehensive learning outcomes assessment model being developed; core competencies have been established for all graduates; significant faculty development effort underway.
- Programmatic affects: low licensure exam pass rates for Physical Therapy Assistant graduates led to program review and curriculum changes, including more frequent testing and a "competency checklist" for each student.

Community College of Baltimore County

- Institutional affects: Strategic Plan identified "learning" as one of eight strategic directions and specified indicators and target benchmarks.
- Programmatic affects: results of focus group sessions of employers and data from alumni survey have necessitated reform of General Education courses.

Cecil Community College

- Institutional affects: beginning to formulate campus-wide assessment program; Institutional Research director will be hired to coordinate assessment.
- Programmatic affects: Visual Communications Department uses portfolios to assess learning; based on results, program curriculum, course scheduling, and advising have been adjusted.

Chesapeake College

- Institutional affects: student survey results led to articulation of general technological capabilities desired; based on data from opinion surveys of graduating students, multicultural programming is being increased.
- Programmatic affects: Nursing program now uses standardized exam given to new seniors as predictor of success on licensing exam; based on results, Nursing faculty formulates and monitors individualized supplementary instruction plans for "at risk" students.

Frederick Community College

- Institutional affects: mini-grant program started for faculty to study methods of assessing student learning; "writing across the curriculum" program has been established.
- Programmatic affects: Nursing students are given an exam after their first year; students who pass but who are identified as "at risk" are given supplemental instruction in critical thinking and nursing education before their second year.

Garrett Community College

- Institutional affects: an outcomes assessment plan for General Education has been established; all associate's degree candidates must demonstrate achievement in seven areas; standardized tests are required of all degree candidates and benchmarks are being established.
- Programmatic affects: the plan is to develop strategies to improve student learning in areas where scores do not measure up to goals.

Hagerstown Community College

- Institutional affects: the college's Core Values and mission statement provide the basis for determining student outcomes; General Education competencies established and are being integrated into the curriculum.
- Programmatic affects: graduate surveys and clinical experience evaluation form have been used for curriculum development and modification.

Harford Community College

- Institutional affects: eight institutional outcomes have been approved through the college's governance process; the course approval process has been revised to require the linking of course objectives to the student academic outcomes.
- Programmatic affects: as a result of self-study and exam pass-rates, the Nursing program initiated an entry/exit exam on critical thinking and is exploring new models of curriculum.

Howard Community College

- Institutional affects: standardized entrance/exit exam tests general educational proficiency of all students every five years; the Learning Outcomes Assessment Program has assisted in over 100 course/program assessments, most involving a three-year "test-implement-retest" cycle, with results communicated both laterally and vertically in the college structure for maximum impact on planning.
- Programmatic affects: based on a cross-divisional evaluation of the "writing across the curriculum" program, new norms were developed for future writing assessments.

Montgomery College

- Institutional affects: the Program and Discipline Review Committee has called for the creation of a college-wide Academic Master Plan and improved data collection, analysis and reporting to assure program accountability.
- Programmatic affects: Developmental Mathematics has piloted a number of intervention strategies (self-paced instruction software, a summer intervention course, and on-line tutoring services); assessment tests are being reviewed to determine which strategies should be continued.

Prince George's Community College

- Institutional affects: assessment of general education became a college-wide initiative, resulting in the development of seven "core learning outcomes" that are expected of all graduates.
- Programmatic affects: all students must submit "institutional portfolios" which are evaluated according to standardized methods by teams of inter-disciplinary faculty raters; poor results trigger departmental review.

College of Southern Maryland

- Institutional affects: results of student opinion surveys led to faculty study of curriculum for those General Education courses with low ratings in students' perception of skill attainment.
- Programmatic affects: as a result of surveys of Nursing graduates and their employers one, three and five years after graduation, faculty are piloting major modifications to the final Nursing course (including a preceptorship and a problem-based learning module in the clinical setting).

Wor-Wic Community College

- Institutional affects: a committee has been formed to review the current learning outcomes assessment process in terms of making it more comprehensive.
- Programmatic affects: test results of degree candidates' skills led to expansion of the General Education curriculum to include computer literacy, necessitating intensive training of faculty in computer technologies.

# Appendix I. Reporting Guidelines

## Background

As part of the State's performance accountability process prior to 1996, Maryland's public colleges and universities had to develop a plan for the assessment of undergraduate student learning outcomes and to submit annual progress reports to the Maryland Higher Education Commission. However, a new accountability system adopted by the Commission in 1996 gave the governing boards of the public campuses primary responsibility for monitoring student learning outcomes, although the Commission retained the option of seeking progress reports on this subject.

The Commission asked the Secretary of Higher Education to work with the heads of the public sectors to develop a formal reporting schedule for the submission of these status reports. Agreement was reached that the public campuses would provide the Commission with a report on their progress in improving student learning, instructional effectiveness, and curriculum every three years. The first set of reports under this arrangement was submitted in 1998

Representatives of the public higher education segments and the Commission have agreed on a common format for the next cycle of student learning outcomes assessment reports. The reports, which shall be due at the Commission on **June 1, 2001**, will have two parts. In Part I, colleges and universities can use information prepared for their Middle States accreditation review to discuss how assessment of student learning at their institutions has affected the educational process at their campuses. In Part II, institutions will examine major changes and improvements that have taken place in selected academic programs as a result of the assessment of student learning outcomes. Although there is no limitation on the length of the reports, campuses should strive for a maximum of six pages. All reports must have a two page executive summary regardless of length. The Commission staff will prepare a document containing these summaries, without editing, and its own analysis.

### Part I. Institutional Impact of Assessment

Campuses will prepare a succinct narrative of the *most* significant ways in which the ongoing assessment of student learning has impacted the educational process at their colleges and universities and has resulted in changes in institutional expectations. This report can draw on the information which each campus provides to achieve Middle States accreditation. As part of this process, colleges and universities periodically review the ways in which they assess student learning and the results of these efforts. Emphasis should be given to those outcomes that have had specific educational benefits for students and graduates.

These can include actions that have resulted from an examination of information obtained from a variety of methods. Examples:

- *Head Counting*, including data about enrollments; graduation, retention and transfer rates; and graduate and professional school admissions.

- *Survey Findings*, including those surveys of graduates and current students to determine their perception about the quality of their education.

- *Test Data*, including the results of licensure or certification examination programs, program completion tests, diagnostic tests in discipline content areas, basic skills proficiency tests, and follow-up studies of remedial students.

- *Other Approaches*, including exit interviews with graduates, review of a portfolio of students' work, and students' evaluation of teaching.

**Part II. Programmatic Assessment**

While the college or university as a whole is responsible for general knowledge and the attainment of critical skills, academic programs and departments assume responsibility for the learning of content, ethics, and modes of inquiry that relate to specific disciplines or professions. In this section of the report, campuses will highlight some of the major changes and improvements that are happening in selected programs as a result of the assessment of student learning outcomes. When applicable, program reviews that have had institution-wide impact on student learning should be cited.

This section of the report may include references to self studies required by agencies, such as National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), and the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC). Discussion of the results of other internal reviews that demonstrate the institution's commitment to insuring program integrity through the evaluation and assessment of internal processes and which promote continuous quality improvement also are appropriate.

# Appendix II. Tables

**Table 1. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Methods Used by Maryland Public Four-Year Colleges and Universities, as Reported in 2001 Institutional SLOAR Reports**

| | BowieS.U | Coppin S.C. | Frostburg S.U. | Salisbury.U. | Towson U. | UB | UMB | UMBC | UMCP | UMES | UMUC | Morgan S.U. | St. Mary's C. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Standardized Pre/Post Proficiency Tests | | | X | | | | | | | | | X | |
| Standardized Proficiency tests of Graduating Student | | | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| College-Designed Tests of Graduating Students | X | X | | | X | | | | | X | X | X | |
| Standardized Tests of Students re: Participation in Educational Activities (NSSE) | | | | X | X | | | X | X | | | | X |
| College-designed Pre/Post Student Opinion Surveys | | | | X | | | | | | | | | |
| Portfolio Evaluation | | X | | | | X | X | X | | X | | | X |
| Capstone Course | X | X | | | X | X | | | | X | X | | |
| Exit Interviews/ Surveys | X | | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X |
| Licensure and Certification Exam Pass Rates | X | X | X | X | | | X | X | | | | | |
| Alumni Surveys | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Graduate School Attendance Rates | | | | X | | | | X | | | | | |
| Graduate Admission Exam Pass Rates | | | | | | | | | | | | | X |
| Graduate Employment Rates | X | | | X | X | | X | X | | | | | X |
| Employer Surveys | X | | X | | | X | X | | | X | | X | X |

**Table 2. Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Methods Used by Maryland Public Community Colleges, as Reported in 2001 Institutional SLOAR Reports**

| | Allegany | Anne Arundel | BCCC | Carroll | CCBC | Cecil | Chesapeake | Frederick | Garrett | Hagerstown | Harford | Howard | Montgomery | Prince Georges | Southern MD. | Wor-Wic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Standardized Pre/Post Proficiency Tests | | | X | X | | | | X | X | | | X | | | | |
| Standardized Proficiency Tests of Graduating Students | | | | | | X | | X | X | | | | | | | |
| College-Designed Proficiency Tests of Graduating Students | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | X |
| Portfolio Evaluation | | X | | X | | X | | | X | | | | | X | | |
| Capstone Course | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | |
| Exit Interviews/ Surveys | X | X | | | | | X | | X | | | | | | X | |
| Licensure and Certification Exam Pass Rates | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | | | X | X | X |
| Alumni Surveys | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Four-Year College Transfer Rates | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| For Transfers, Freshman GPA at 4-YR Colleges | | | | | | X | | | | X | | | | | X | |
| For Transfers, % earning BA degree | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | |
| Employment Rates of Graduates | | X | X | | X | | X | | | | | | | | X | |
| Employer Surveys | X | X | | | X | X | | | X | X | | | X | | X | |

## Appendix III. Executive Summaries of Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Reports Submitted by Each Institution

# PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

**Bowie State University**

With funding via its *Access and Success Grant*, the University enhanced its student outcomes assessment initiative by hiring a Director of Outcomes Assessment, a Data Analyst, and a Graduate Assistant to establish an Office of Outcomes Assessment. The University's outcomes assessment strategy involves a continuous process of self-reflection that leads to change and improvement. Under the leadership of Director of Outcomes, the University established an Outcomes Assessment Board (UOAB) to coordinate the articulation and implementation of outcomes assessment design. However, the Director of Assessment resigned in September 2000.

Under the leadership of the UOAB, over the last two years, all academic departments developed and implemented initial comprehensive outcomes assessment plans for monitoring program effectiveness and student achievement and development. Additionally, designs have been articulated for the General Education Curriculum, academic support units, and off-campus instructional centers. The most comprehensive outcomes assessment plan has been developed by the Model Institutions for Excellence Program. Because the other units were on the second tier of the University's projected outcomes assessment plan, they await leadership from a new Director of Outcomes Assessment.

Three instruments will be designed to assess students' satisfaction, perceptions, and attitudes. One of the three, the *Graduating Senior Exit Survey (GSES),* was developed and used with the 1999-2000 Graduating Class. Currently, other data are being compiled from alumni surveys and REGIS, a front-end data query system funded via the *Access and Success Grant*.

Such data indicate that students are generally pleased with the University's academic programs and preparation of them for employment. Based on the retention data provided each semester by the Office of Enrollment Management, the University has implemented a number of initiatives which should enable the University to exceed the projected 76% retention rate of its 2001 Freshman Cohort. The University continues to make strides in improving its six-year graduation rate, and with the increase in summer school and mini-semester enrollments, the University should exceed its projected 46% graduation rate for its 1996 Cohort.

The three departments selected to reflect programmatic student outcomes assessment are English, Education, and Nursing. These departments serve as role models in assessment design and, in collaboration with the former Director of Outcomes Assessment, have presented the University's Student Outcomes Assessment Design at two national and one regional conference. The Education Department is accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Nursing Department is accredited by the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC). The English Education Program is accredited through NCATE via the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).

All three departments have articulated outcomes, indicators, assessment instruments, and observed results. The Education Department relies heavily on its students' performance on the PRAXIS Examination and NCATE Standards. One hundred percent (100%) of the

Department's graduates pass the PRAXIS I and II Examinations and are fully certified upon graduation.

The Department of Nursing relies heavily on two standardized instruments: the *RN/BSN Clinical Evaluation of Critical Behaviors Instrument* and the *RN/NSN Clinical Evaluation of Leadership and Management Critical Behaviors*. Based on data gleaned from these instruments, one hundred percent (100%) of the 2000 nursing graduates had met the outcomes articulated by the Nursing Department.

The English Department uses a capstone course, the English Proficiency, and the PRAXIS Specialty Test as the major measures of its students' outcomes. The data gathered on its Spring 2000 graduates reflect that one hundred percent (100%) of the students had met the articulated outcomes. However, the students' performance on one instrument, the *English Comprehensive Examination,* suggests that the Department needs to review the curriculum in light of this examination.

Overall, the University has made significant strides in the incorporation of outcomes assessment into the academic fabric, and the departments are taking ownership. The next phase of this initiative is to make data collection and analysis a routine process, implement the designs for the academic support units, and incorporate all of the assessment data into the University's total planning, budgeting, and assessment plan.

**Coppin State College**

*Part I Institutional Impact of Assessment*

Coppin State College has demonstrated a consistent increase in student enrollment from 2578 in fall 1990 to 3890 in fall 2000. These enrollment trends, which are expected to continue through 2010, attest to the College's success in meeting its mission. The College has set as its number one priority, graduation and retention improvements. Evaluation of procedures, effectiveness of programs and implementation of new innovations are being implemented to achieve the new benchmarks established by the school.

Coppin has made a commitment to the maintenance and continued improvement of student learning outcomes as a measurement of institutional effectiveness. In addition to data collected as part of the mandated performance accountability process, Coppin State College has an ongoing outcomes assessment process, which consists of data collected in four broad categories: internal program review, external program review, formal and informal testing, and follow-up studies. Academic Programs are reviewed internally on a schedule, which was revised AY01, to coincide with external review dates. This academic year, the internal Academic Program Review Committee was re-activated and has assumed the responsibility for revising the internal program review matrix to include the assurance of technology fluency and congruence with external academic accreditation program standards.

General education requirements are included in the internal review process, and through the use of informal faculty and student surveys and formal instruments, assure acceptable student learning outcomes in this arena. The Curriculum Standards and Policy Committee assumed responsibility for implementation and monitoring of this review process in 2000. In addition to GER assessments, the Office of Institutional Research administers faculty and course evaluations for each class offered during fall and spring semesters. The instrument allows students to evaluate the effectiveness of their particular course and instructor. Divisions, departments, and individual faculty members use the results when considering modifications in course content and instructional approach.

Portfolio assessment is an integral part of the overall assessment process. The Division of Education uses portfolios to assess communication skills, ability to organize and synthesize information, mastery of teaching skills, and ability to develop instructional units. Portfolio assessment is imbedded in Arts and Science courses, Freshmen Composition and the English Major. The portfolio measures metacognitive skills to the extent of the student's understanding of his or her writing processes and overall writing ability. Beginning in academic year 2002, student portfolios will also be required to demonstrate technology fluency.

Student progress is also assessed through both formal and informal testing. Student performance on standardized tests is reviewed during the admissions screening process for placement testing and as part of the licensure requirements for graduates of teacher education and the nursing programs. After students have been admitted to the College, they must take additional diagnostic/placement tests in Mathematics, Reading, and English before registering for classes. Students have three semesters to achieve appropriate performance levels in all areas. Students enrolled in developmental studies courses are also supported by the Academic Resource Center, which provides tutoring and mentoring on an individual and class basis.

To complete the internal and external assessment process, the Office of Institutional Research (OIR) conducts follow-up studies. Results from these surveys are shared with vice

presidents, deans and department chairs, and are used in preparation for accreditation reviews. Used to develop substantive accountability and institutional effectiveness reports, the surveys gather information directly from students regarding their Coppin experiences, determine progression rates, assess the College's effectiveness in preparing students for their jobs, and measure students' satisfaction with the preparation they received. Tracking and reporting these data have provided the impetus for better program and support services evaluation and change.

*Part II -Programmatic Assessment*

Programs in Nursing, Rehabilitation Counseling, Social Work, and Teacher Education are reviewed by state and/or national accrediting bodies. Assessment of student learning outcomes comprises a major portion of the reviews and evaluations. Additionally, licensure examination results are included as program evaluation tools. Results from state and national professional examinations serve as a basis for program planning for individual students and for making curricular changes to more adequately address student needs.

Internal review and assessment of Coppin's Teacher Education, Nursing, and Social Work programs have produced definitive information used for program improvements that may be applicable to other disciplines. Teacher Education has initiated an assessment process that permits an examination of student performance: (1) prior to being admitted to the teacher education program, (2) before enrollment in methods courses, (3) during student teaching, and (4) before students exit from the teacher education program. Specific criteria must be met at each assessment point to continue to the next step of the program. The system prescribes a data collection process that can be used to inform the decision-making process of the specific program and the division, to assure continuous quality improvement. Annual reviews and analysis of data collected in the areas described allow the teacher education program to make changes designed to strengthen program delivery, content, and student learning outcomes. This relatively new process, developed in conjunction with OIR and the Academic Program Review Committee, insures assessment continuity and may have implications for college-wide use.

The Social Work Program's own self-study was prepared for the COSWE Accreditation Commission site visit in spring of 2000. The Site Review Team noted numerous program strengths, originating with the congruency of the Program with the College's mission, and culminating with the Program's systematic plan and implementation of program review and evaluation. Coppin's undergraduate program in Social Work was noted as being clearly conceptualized, focused, and well articulated. Outcomes measures and employment of solid assessment approaches were identified as being well defined and consistent with the well-structured, organized curriculum which is developed as an integrated whole.

An interim evaluation report was submitted to the National League for Nursing in spring 2000. The Master Plan for Evaluation, submitted in the self-study report of 1997, included a timetable for annual, bi-annual, three- or five-year review of all program components. Consistent with the Division's slogan, "Always Under Development," the plan provides a systematic means to determine the Program's success in achieving its goals and objectives, and provides a mechanism for measurement of program inputs, operations and outcomes. Faculty, students, alumni, and employers fuel the data-driven process that assures informed decision-making.

**Frostburg State University**

At Frostburg State University (FSU), assessment is an ongoing process. Assessment of student learning outcomes at the institutional level is conducted primarily through the University Assessment Plan and the annual evaluation of the University's learning community program. These assessment initiatives and their impact on the University are discussed in Part I of this report. Part II examines discipline-specific (programmatic) assessment occurring in each of the University's colleges and the institution's new Periodic Program Review guidelines.

Part I. Institutional Impact of Assessment

The University's Assessment Plan: The University Assessment Plan (UAP) was formulated with the specific intent that the University would use assessment information for instruction, curriculum, and planning. The first aspect of the UAP is the measurement of critical thinking and communication skills of FSU students at different times in their undergraduate careers. After two separate rounds of study beginning in 1998, results suggest that critical thinking skills improve among FSU students between their freshman and senior years. There is less improvement, however, in their communication skills over the same time period. These findings and faculty interest in a "writing across the curriculum" program will be carefully considered during the University's current General Education Program review.

Assessment of the educational and personal development of first-year students constitutes the second aspect of the UAP. This assessment is carried out through the use of two instruments: the Freshman Entrance and the Freshman Experience surveys. Based on information from both surveys, the University has launched several new initiatives designed to help achieve undergraduate enrollment goals while enhancing the academic climate on campus. One of the most important of these initiatives is the Working Scholars Program. First-semester freshmen chosen as working scholars are matched with professors and earn an educational stipend by serving as lab assistants or conducting research.

The third and final aspect of the UAP centers on alumni experiences while at the University and after graduation. Through the use of the University Alumni Survey, the institution gathers information important to the overall quality of the institution. This survey is also useful to academic departments engaged in the preparation of Periodic Program Reviews (see Part II).

Evaluation of Learning Communities: The University's learning community program was established in 1997 and enrolls over 300 students each fall. Open to first-semester freshmen, the program allows students to take selected classes together in an atmosphere designed to build support networks with their peers, the faculty, and the University. Learning communities are evaluated on an annual basis through the use of student surveys and focus groups. The academic performance of learning community students and their retention at the University are also studied. Survey results suggest that learning communities provide students with a supportive environment in which to make the transition from high school to college. Learning community students are retained at the University at a higher rate than their non-community counterparts. The positive impact of learning communities on student adjustment and retention are two important reasons for the continuance of the program.

Part II: Programmatic Assessment

Important programmatic assessment work at FSU is underway by academic departments in all three of the University's colleges. This work is aided by the University's new Periodic Program Review (PPR) guidelines.

College of Education: The College of Education is well on its way to implementing programmatic assessment plans that focus on student learning outcomes and help to ensure program integrity and quality. Its teacher education program achieved the "Preconditions" for professional accreditation during the fall of 1999 from the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). The performance of candidates (i.e., education students) on external measures was among the most significant factors contributing to achieving the "Preconditions." The Department of Educational Professions at FSU has instituted stringent program admission and exit performance standards in each of its three program phases and has assessed candidates on them. With few exceptions, admitted candidates met these standards between 1993 and 1999. Beginning fall 1999, entry into the program requires students to pass the Praxis I test at the state standard. Candidates' performance on exit standards, including their extended internship, exceed minimum standards set to graduate from FSU's teacher education programs. First-year teachers are pleased with the preparation they received from FSU and experience minimal difficulties. School principals are also pleased with the teaching performance of recent FSU graduates.

The college's departments of Health and Physical Education and Recreation and Parks Management are instituting assessment procedures to ensure program quality and relevance. The Health and Physical Education Program is currently revising course syllabi to reflect NCATE certification standards and evaluating its progress in attaining diversity and technology goals. The Recreation and Parks Management Program received accreditation in October 2000 and has been integrating standards set by accrediting agencies into the curriculum. The department is assessing student competency in meeting these standards through information gathered from current students and recent graduates.

College of Business: The College of Business was awarded candidacy status in February 2001 by the AACSB - The International Association for Management Education. The college is currently developing an assessment plan for each of its academic programs (accounting, business administration, and MBA) that will meet AACSB standards. It will be aided in this effort by its establishment of community advisory boards and visits between faculty and business management teams.

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences was established in 1998 as part of the reorganization of the Division of Academic Affairs. Annual reporting of program-specific benchmark information began in the spring of 2001 as a first step toward instituting active assessment plans in each of the college's academic departments. Some departments, however, have long been engaged in successful assessment activities. One of the college's most active and innovative departments in this regard is Psychology. The department's assessment of its undergraduate program and Master of Science in Counseling Psychology focuses effectively on evaluating student development and learning outcomes.

Periodic Program Reviews: Current assessment work in each college is facilitated by the University's new Periodic Program Review (PPR) guidelines. These guidelines require academic departments to carefully evaluate the currency and effectiveness of their programs.

**Salisbury University**

The timing of the 2001 Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report (SLOAR) coincided nicely with the development and delivery of the University's Five-Year Periodic Review Report to the Commission on Higher Education Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA). Primary among the topics of interest to the MSA is evidence of on-going outcomes assessment to improve institutional effectiveness, and, in particular, student learning outcomes.

Of the USM institutions, Salisbury University continues to graduate the greatest proportion of entering freshmen within six years. The University's reputation as a quality, public comprehensive university is recognized in several national publications and by our peers. However, these indicators of excellence and achievement are less important than the skills and values we impart to Salisbury students. Salisbury University considers essential to its identity the core values of excellence, student-centeredness, learning, community, civic engagement, and diversity. These values are the heart of our efforts to ensure excellence in academic programming, to provide comprehensive instruction and practice in content areas, to promote skills development, to foster critical thinking proficiencies, and to cultivate respect for the value of global, societal, and individual differences.

The University validates student learning outcomes through a variety of instruments, measures, and methodologies at the course, departmental, school, and institutional level. Retention and graduation rates provide an indication of success but do not communicate specific outcomes. Instead, the University considers the following measures more indicative of student learning and institutional effectiveness:

- 32% of SSU graduates enroll for additional course-work within one year of graduation; of these, 82% are pursuing a Master's degree or higher
- the total graduate school going rate within one year of graduation is 26%; of these, 29% are pursuing a Master's degree in Education, while 16% are pursuing a Master's in Social Work
- 86% are pursuing graduate study in a major the same as or related to their undergraduate degree
- 98% report that Salisbury University prepared them for graduate study
- 83% are employed full-time
- 20% of those employed full-time are employed as teachers
- the licensure pass rate for the Respiratory Therapy Entry Level Credential Exam was 100%
- the licensure pass rate for the Medical Technologist Certification Exam was 100%

The University conducts course assessments or processes to measure student learning in skills and content areas. Equally significant to SSU faculty and administration are students' assessment of those same skills one year after graduation, and, whether or not, in the opinion of the graduate, the University provided satisfactory instruction. The University gains this information through an annual survey of alumni, and, according to the 1998-1999 graduating class:

- 95.7% were satisfied that they were taught to utilize a broad base of knowledge in multiple applications

- 96.6% were satisfied that they were taught to speak, read, write, and listen effectively
- 98.1% were satisfied that they were taught to identify and solve problems, think critically, and reason effectively
- 91.6% were satisfied that they were taught to use information technology in multiple applications

Several of Salisbury University's professional programs have earned specialized accreditation, certifying that a program meets the criteria and standards of an accrediting agency. These agencies require periodic program assessment to measure, validate, or certify quality in higher education. They also establish rigid criteria and standards for program accreditation and validate the success of the program through multiple measures, including student learning outcomes. Stringent standards may add substantially to the overall cost of an academic program but are designed to ensure academic rigor. Salisbury University has earned specialized accreditation in the following programs: Accounting, Athletic Training, Business Administration, Chemistry, Economics, Elementary Education, Environmental Health, Management, Medical Technology, Nursing, Physical Education, Respiratory Therapy, and Social Work. Each program is able to validate in detail the success of the curriculum and student learning to the appropriate accrediting agency and to the University.

Salisbury University conducts student learning outcomes assessment at both the program and the institutional level. Throughout the academic year, other activities support the University's efforts to validate institutional effectiveness, including:

- Participation in the 2000 National Survey of Student Engagement
- Participation in the 1999-2000 Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Survey
- Review of every institutional academic program every five to seven years
- Participation in the 2001 National Study of Instructional Costs and Productivity (the Delaware Study) and
- Participation by the Perdue School of Business in an International Association for Management Education (AACSB) Benchmarking Study and a Survey of Business Alumni

Finally, Salisbury University has been reviewing its general education curriculum. In fall 2000, after three and a half years of work, extensive research, and consultation with the Salisbury State University faculty, the General Education Task Force (GETF) submitted to the Provost two models suggesting curricular frameworks for the revision of general education. Both models are assessment driven.

Salisbury University is fully engaged in program and student learning outcomes assessment. The University is acutely aware of the dynamic nature of assessment and the need for continuous improvement. As a result, it is continually enhancing its institutional, program, and course assessments to validate institutional effectiveness and improve learning. Although current processes and activities provide ample evidence of student, and therefore, institutional success, these same processes are under continuous review.

**Towson University**

This report illustrates the integration of assessment into the Towson University educational environment by providing examples of changes in actions, services, and processes across the university due to assessment feedback (Part I.) and major improvements in selected academic programs as a result of academic assessment (Part II.).

A number of important assessment activities or outcomes at Towson over the last three years are described below.

- The coordinators of the Developmental Mathematics and Developmental Writing programs altered curriculum and placement scores to focus on skills most lacking in entering students in light of rising admissions standards.
- The University has maintained a vigorous major assessment program that is reported in Section II of this report.
- The University Assessment Council supervised the administration of the nationally standardized Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) in the spring of 1997 as a pilot project and a second administration of the SSI in 1998, to a larger sample of students, with similar results. In both surveys, through their "high importance" and "high satisfaction" ratings, the students generally characterized Towson University as having a good reputation in the community; knowledgeable and accessible faculty; a safe, secure, and well-maintained campus; adequate library resources and services; readily available tutoring services; and a good variety of courses that provide broad general knowledge as well as valuable content in the major area of study. The report also indicated that those surveyed enjoyed being students at Towson and reported that they were able to experience intellectual growth.

  The following initiatives and changes, based on the SSI, implemented to improve services that were rated as very important and least satisfying by students, illustrate the integration of assessment into University operations:

  - Advising - The Student Academic Services division developed and implemented a "First Year Experience" (FYE) freshman-advising program in which new freshmen were assigned to faculty or professional advisors for the full academic year and enrolled in sequential orientation courses both semesters. Building on the success of the FYE mandatory advising program for freshman, a similar program for new transfers was implemented in Fall 2000.
  - Admissions - The Admissions Office made several important changes after receiving the SSI results. An audit and subsequent change in the office workflow resulted in a 50% reduction in processing and response time.
  - Financial Aid - Utilizing a variety of assessment methods and tools, the Financial Aid Office made changes that dramatically improved services to students. As a result of new initiatives, the Financial Aid Office handles over 3,000 calls per month with most calls waiting less than one minute for a response; ninety percent of this year's financial aid awards were out to students by mid March, as compared with mid July three years ago.

- Timely Feedback on Student Progress in Courses – In Fall 2000, Towson University began an "Early Warning" function for new freshmen and transfer students.
- The Enrollment Services Department improved services by implementing on-line access for almost every service available, including course availability checks, on-line registration, dropping classes, address changes, grade and account balance checks, and on-line forms for graduation applications and transcript requests.

Towson University uses other assessment measures and approaches to learn about and enhance the student learning environment:

- The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was administered for the first time at Towson University in Spring 2000.
- One of the University's Management for Results (MFR) objectives is to "Increase the percentage of Student Government affiliated organizations performing volunteer work."
- Also based on the 2000 Managing For Results (MFR) report, students who graduated in 1998 and 1999 indicated high levels of satisfaction with their education received at Towson University
- The Career Center and the Tutorial Services Center have both added additional programs and services in the last two years as a result of survey information and other assessment feedback.

At Towson University, each program, which includes majors and concentrations, is required to submit two types of assessment reports. The main assessment report entitled "Majors Assessment Report with Student Performance Data" is required every three years. The second required report is entitled, "Annual Majors Assessment Progress Report." It consists of documentation of program revisions made over time to the program's assessment plan as a result of the Major Assessment Resource Subcommittee's suggestions for improvement and the department's response to the assessment information it collects. A number of programs have made major design changes due to assessment feedback. Examples are given in the full report.

Besides internal reviews, the University has also passed the rigors of a number of external review bodies that demonstrate the University's commitment to program integrity and continuous quality improvement. Within this three-year period, the University received accreditation from AACSB, the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, and the Computer Science Accreditation Commission.

**University of Baltimore**

Efforts aimed at assessing student growth, program applicability, and graduate satisfaction continue to be important in ensuring that the University meets its mission.
A wide range of assessment instruments is employed to gather data that can be used to evaluate the quality and delivery of instruction, strengthen existing programs, and develop new undergraduate courses, specialization, and degree programs.

The Office of Institutional Research maintains the Data Warehouse with five years of fall data on headcount, majors, credit hours, FTEs, and degrees. A Semester Enrollment Report, with information on demographics of students and majors, has been produced every fall and spring since 1987. A Retention, Attrition, and Graduation Report is prepared every spring. Finally, both a Report on the Distribution of Grades by discipline, majors, and school and a Faculty Workload Report are prepared each semester. This data is used to evaluate the most appropriate delivery systems and course scheduling for current undergraduate programs as well as to assess enrollment trends in specific academic programs, and therefore, program development and evaluation.

We conduct a number of surveys to assess student learning. Among these is the University of Baltimore Alumni Survey, which is mailed to graduates of the Yale Gordon College of Liberal Arts and the Merrick School of Business six months after graduation. The form asks for demographic and marketing information, professional goals, past and current employment data, and satisfaction with University services and characteristics.

The Provost's Office also conducts special studies. The Computer Technology and Access Survey (Spring 2000), which provided important information on the level of computer usage, access, and sophistication among students and faculty, appears to support that our students have access to computer technology on demand. This survey, in partial response to the Board of Regents Technology Fluency Plan, also extended the discussion of 24/7 computer labs for students.

The Office of Student Services conducts surveys of student and alumni satisfaction as do the Admissions Office, the Alumni Office, and the Career Center. In addition, the Career Center surveys on-campus recruiters regarding their satisfaction with the preparation of UB graduates.

*Summary of Findings*

New majors and new delivery methods of existing majors altered the make-up of the student body between 1996 and 2000. Though the total headcount was hardly changed in this period, there was a substantial increase in the number of full-time students, women students, older students, minority and international students. Both the undergraduate and graduate headcount increased while that of law declined. The changing popularity of academic programs brought about large shifts in the relative proportion of students in the college and two schools, with the Yale Gordon College of Liberal Arts emerging as the largest academic unit at what had been a "business and law school" for almost 75 years.

Assessment of student learning outcomes in the Yale Gordon College of Liberal Arts remains organized within each undergraduate degree program. Many programs have developed Student Learning Objectives and a variety of assessment measures to examine the achievement of these objectives. Predominantly the undergraduate and graduate programs of the College use capstone courses, interviews with students, and surveys of students and/or alumni to assess whether or not learning objectives have been met. The assessment has led to the development of capstone courses in a variety of the disciplines.

Assessment of student learning has clearly affected the quality of education we provide in the Merrick School and influenced curricular and administrative changes. First, the focus on practical but important skills such as communication has helped reinforce for both students and faculty the importance of communication skills for business school graduates. Second, the focus has allowed us to involve external constituents directly in the educational process. The business school's student surveys have led to improvements in the student advising center, which was moved to a more accessible location and has adjusted its hours to become more available to students. We have also developed a separate assessment instrument for our Internet degree programs so as to do a more relevant job in assessing their effectiveness. Our new e-commerce specialization and three of our new certificate programs were developed in part because of student survey feedback about their relevance and importance. Finally, we have added further criteria to faculty annual teaching reports to capture better concerns (e.g., course duplication) that have emerged in the survey results.

The development of a college-wide assessment plan is underway. This plan will require each academic program to have a more formal process of assessment. In addition to providing evidence of student learning outcomes, each program plan will show how results of assessment will be utilized to develop and improve both program structures and teaching/learning outcomes. Moreover, we will continue to conduct, on a regular basis, several surveys that will examine the attainment of learning outcomes from a broader perspective.

Looking to the immediate future, the University of Baltimore will begin a process to develop an Outcomes Assessment Plan, and within the next two years a complete review of the Upper Division Core Requirement will be undertaken. This is prompted by the manner in which the College of Liberal Arts and the School of Business have chosen to implement the recent Computer Fluency Standards established by the Board of Regents of USM.

## University of Maryland, Baltimore

Since the University of Maryland, Baltimore is primarily a graduate and professional degree granting institution, the three undergraduate degree programs offered, Dental Hygiene, Nursing, and Medical and Research Technology, comprise only 15% of the total student enrollment. Each program has prepared a separate outcomes report, which is attached.

Outcomes assessment is an important tool embraced by the University. These undergraduate programs, like all of our professional programs, are subject to intensive accrediting processes imposed by the national professional associations, which provide regular extramural review of quality and mission.

### *Part I. Institutional Impact of Assessment*

The **Dental Hygiene** program enrolls students in three undergraduate options: (1) the two-year professional curriculum, (2) the three-year professional curriculum and (3) the B.S. degree completion program for licensed dental hygienists. Retention and graduation rates in the Dental Hygiene program continue to be excellent. During the past three years (1997-2000), with undergraduate enrollment ranging from 56-62 students each year, there have been only 4 student withdrawals and 1 academic dismissal. In a survey of B.S. degree completion graduates from a ten-year period (1989-99), 6 respondents (N=29) had completed graduate or professional degrees (5 M.S. and 1 D.D.S.) and 6 were enrolled in graduate programs. On the National Board Examination for a three-year period, two Dental Hygiene students failed with scores just under the required 75%; all other students passed, with a school average score at or slightly above the national average. The two students who failed the exam on the first attempt passed on their second attempt.

Table 1 reports the three-year enrollment, graduation and employment rates for all **School of Nursing** undergraduate students.

Table 1- School of Nursing Enrollment, Graduation and Employment Rates

| Year | Enrollment | Graduation Rates | Employment Rates |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fall, 1998 | 662 | 87% | 100% |
| Fall, 1999 | 621 | 86% | 96% |
| Fall, 2000 | 635 | 88% | 100% |

Students' satisfaction with faculty and courses elicited at the conclusion of each academic semester as well as at the end of the program (Table 2) has remained stable, with students viewing courses and faculty positively for the three year period of 1998-2000.

Table 2-School of Nursing Student Program Satisfaction

| YEAR | SATISFACTION WITH FACULTY | SATISFACTION WITH COURSES | END OF PROGRAM SATISFACTION |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1998 | 88% | 87% | 89% |
| 1999 | 88% | 87% | 93% |
| 2000 | 89% | 89% | 89% |

Student evaluation of courses and faculty is regularly sought through course evaluation questionnaires. As a result, a number of changes have been made in course and clinical schedules, teaching techniques and strategies, academic resources and student life amenities. Data from the National Council Licensure Examination for academic year 2000 graduates indicate an improvement in performance on the nursing licensure examination for first-time test takers from 1998 to 1999 (82% to 85%) and consistent performance in the year 2000. The

educational process has been impacted by these assessment efforts through curricular review and revision. Curricular changes have ensured thorough coverage of key content within the curriculum. Increased use of critical thinking techniques and objective testing measures has been implemented. Clinical skill development has been enhanced through the use of advanced clinical simulation laboratory experiences and use of "standardized patients" (actors who enact clinical symptoms and communication needs). Adding more small group seminars enhances critical thinking and analysis skills.

In the fall of 1999, the Department of **Medical and Research Technology** (DMRT) integrated key aspects of the medical technology and biomedical science research tracks into a more functional and marketable curriculum. Employers have voiced the need for baccalaureate-level workers with a wider range of skills and a broader knowledge base. The department has seen a decline in enrollment, which also is mirrored nationally. Faculty members have "adopted" community colleges in the Maryland area and are visiting science classes and Career Days to increase exposure of the profession. A joint degree program with Towson University is currently being formulated. An Internet based generic curriculum track has been developed to expand enrollment. On average, over the past three years, 90% or more of the students rated the program as excellent or above average in intellectual growth, career training and professional development. Ninety-five percent of the employers surveyed rated the academic preparation of our students excellent or good. At least 90% of the employers rated the technical preparation and the professional development of our students as excellent or good. Notably, 100% of the employers stated they would hire another graduate. The program pass rate on the ASCP certification exam declined in the year 2000. All students are required to take a formal course, MEDT 402 Comprehensive Review designed to facilitate their passing the national certification exam. In addition, a problem-based review session has been added in Chemistry. In two courses in the curriculum, MEDT 309 Professional Development and MEDT 409 Laboratory Management, students complete portfolio assessments. Over the past 3 years, on average, DMRT students have given high ratings to course content and instructors.

*Part II. Programmatic Assessment*

In the **Dental Hygiene** program, important program changes have been implemented as a result of survey item trends. For example, students' experiences with hard tissue examination and charting have been strengthened and Pathology has been made a separate course.

In the **School of Nursing**, students select a clinical field of concentration based on their future career interest. These synthesis-level courses are structured to enable students to gain additional knowledge and clinical skills in nursing content and application.

The Department of **Medical and Research Technology** underwent a full scale Departmental Review in November of 1999 by the School of Medicine. The report from the two external reviewers noted the following strong points: quality of the student body, commitment of the department to student diversity, outcomes of retention and graduation rates, sensitivity to the community needs, leadership of the department, campus community and modern facilities.

**University of Maryland Baltimore County**

*Part I: Institutional Impact of Assessment*

UMBC engages in extensive assessment activities designed to evaluate and improve student learning and to determine accountability for the quality of student learning. UMBC's assessment efforts complement ongoing campus planning processes and are used to support the reexamination of assumptions, values, priorities, goals, objectives, practices, and programs as they relate to our mission and position among other institutions.

Student learning outcomes assessment is one component of academic program reviews and an important focus of institutional performance accountability reports submitted annually to MHEC. Both reports focus on student learning outcome measures including retention rates, graduation rates, alumni satisfaction, and post-graduate education and employment rates. There are also periodic student surveys that measure campus climate, student satisfaction, and alumni satisfaction. Specific programs such as Education, Emergency Health Services, Engineering, Psychology, and Social Work are reviewed periodically by accrediting bodies that emphasize student learning outcomes, and data from licensure examinations document our students' high level of achievement. UMBC has also participated in the newly introduced *National Survey of Student Engagement*, which measures student engagement in many important activities that relate to student learning and personal development. On a campus-wide basis, students evaluate classroom teaching for their courses every semester, and these evaluations are a mandated component of faculty promotion, tenure, merit, and post-tenure reviews. Collectively, these and other assessment activities continually inform the campus community of UMBC's current performance and standing among its institutional peers and provide a sound basis for reexamining goals, priorities, and action.

Recent large-scale efforts at self-examination at UMBC illustrate using institutional data for formative purposes and its direct impact on planning and action by the University. Over a two-year period beginning in the summer of 1998, in conjunction with its strategic planning process, UMBC convened six task forces to consider issues of importance to the campus and to recommend policies, initiatives, and specific actions. These groups included the *Enrollment Management Task Force*, the *Advisement Task Force*, the *Task Force on Continuing Education*, the *Task Force on UMBC as an Honors University*, the *Task Force on the Research Culture and Environment at UMBC*, and the *Task Force on Student Life at UMBC*. The unifying goal of these task forces was to tie their recommendations to fiscal priorities within the context of UMBC's articulated vision, values, and priorities. In addition, an *Ad Hoc Committee on Gender Equity in Science, Mathematics, Information Technology, and Engineering* was formed to examine departmental and institutional policies and practices that affect recruitment, retention, and advancement of women in these fields.

These task forces drew extensively on institutional assessment data, supplemented with focused analyses of data relevant to their inquiries. Collectively, the recommendations of the task forces have generated much campus discussion and an extensive list of campus priorities. Although some recommendations will be the focus of ongoing substantive discussion and

debate among the faculty, and although resource limitations will constrain full implementation, the iterative processes of assessment, evaluation, planning, prioritizing, and budgeting illustrated by these task forces demonstrate UMBC's commitment to using data from institutional assessment for enhancement of student learning outcomes.

*Part II: Programmatic Assessment*

In addition to institution-wide uses of assessment, we examine cognitive outcomes by asking "What is it a UMBC graduate should know and be able to do at the end of his or her experience here?" Reflecting on this question, some departments have incorporated performance and portfolio assessments into their programs. For example, students wishing to become Visual Arts majors must first pass a portfolio review of materials they have produced in response to departmental guidelines.

The Department of Education requires all entering students to begin a portfolio, which they continue to develop throughout their course of study at UMBC. Included in the portfolio is an array of evidence documenting their professional growth: lesson plans and corresponding examinations; written reflections on their teaching experiences; and sample letters written to parents and parent-teacher organizations. These portfolios are used to assess UMBC students' readiness for licensure.

In the Department of Theatre, all seniors are required to complete a senior project, which is either a 10-15-minute performance of challenging dramatic material or a design presentation. Design and technical theatre majors may design an entire production, and that work is critiqued by appropriate departmental faculty. The scientific process is continually assessed in the laboratories of such departments as Biological Sciences, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Physics, Psychology, and Mechanical Engineering.

As a first stage in following the recommendation of the *Task Force on UMBC as an Honors University*, a pilot study of a 3-credit technology-enriched English writing course was conducted during the 1999-2000 academic year. This project's multimodal approach to assessment included a preliminary faculty-needs survey, reports of student learning from both the student and faculty perspectives, and an evaluation of faculty learning.

We have also been examining cognitive outcomes by working closely with other institutions, including K-12, to outline standards in the disciplines. Our Center for History Education is an excellent example of a K-16 effort to develop K-12 standards in history. Development of the standards for a "C" paper in English is another example of collaborative work across institutions, both two- and four-year, that has aided instruction and assessment.

**University of Maryland, College Park**

The University of Maryland continues to increase the types and amount of data it gathers that describe student learning and student satisfaction. Maryland's Managing for Results program has made the reporting of specific institutional indicators routine. In addition, the Campus Assessment Working Group regularly gathers information on student outcomes on a campus-wide basis and publicizes them widely. The President and his cabinet rely on data about students to inform many decisions. Finally, the institution is currently developing an institutional outcomes assessment plan as part of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education Periodic Report that will provide guidelines for evaluating student learning at the program level.

The academic qualifications of incoming freshmen have increased steadily over the past five years. These talented students are taking advantage of the enrichment programs that the University offers such that 59% of freshmen are enrolled in some special program. With the increase in student qualification and in the attention and mentoring they receive, the one-year retention rate has climbed steadily. The 4-year graduation rates are climbing also, although the 6-year graduation rate remains constant.

The University of Maryland Student Survey provides information on juniors and seniors. Questions that are aligned with the strategic plan's goal of offering enriched educational experiences show that students take advantage of the special strengths of a research university. The survey also shows that students believe that they have acquired knowledge and skills applicable to a specific career, that they have learned to write effectively, and that they know what additional education they need to pursue their careers. Overwhelmingly students report that the University has affected their IT skills, including their abilities with word-processing, email, the Web, navigating on-line materials and using electronic information resources.

The National Survey of Student Engagement compared the University of Maryland with other participating AAU institutions. The University of Maryland ranked third in seniors' assessment of the level of academic challenge, second in the opportunities seniors have had for active and collaborative learning, first in senior's interactions with faculty members, and third in enriched education experiences that seniors have had.

Programmatic assessment takes place at the University of Maryland in many ways. During 1996-97 all graduate programs were reviewed and many substantive changes resulted. The changes in Nuclear Engineering and in the graduate programs in French, German and Russian are illustrative of the transformation that followed this comprehensive review.

All programs are reviewed at least every seven years, both by an internal and an external committee. The review of the Philosophy program resulted in substantive changes that have improved the advising of students and the coherence of the curriculum.

Departments regularly discuss the curricula they offer. For example, the Physics Program, in response to declining enrollments, has revised its undergraduate options to better serve the needs of students and to broaden the education opportunities for its undergraduates.

The College of Education, working with the Arts and Sciences Colleges, has initiated substantive curriculum reform to improve the education of secondary education majors. A subject degree is now required and multiple pathways to certification will increase the number of well-trained teachers.

## University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES)

One of the five-year goals of the University is to "develop and implement programs of performance assessment of student learning outcomes." At UMES, assessment efforts generally fall into one of two types. Most have "program improvement" as their goal. In this category, assessment activities are undertaken in order to elicit information that would allow the University (or specific programs and courses) to know what seems to be working well and what is not. The other category is directed less at program improvement and more focused on measuring and improving individual student learning. In these efforts, faculty define specific competencies that students must achieve and then measure whether or not a student has met these expectations. The University strives to become a leader in the State in the assessment of student learning outcomes in the basic skills, general education and discipline-specific learning activities.

*General Education*

In June of 1994, the UMES General Education Assessment Project (GeAP) was initiated. The UMES GeAP assesses the quality and character of its General Education Requirements (GER) for the purpose of identifying ways to increase the efficacy and rigor of these courses. As of May, 2001, five major outcomes goals have been accomplished: 1) The General Education Assessment Committee with faculty assistance has successfully identified student-learning outcomes for all courses within the general education sequence, 2) all courses within the general education sequence have been modified to include the student-learning outcomes germane to each individual course, 3) assessment criteria have been established for every course within the general education sequence, 4) a process and procedure for verifying student-learning outcomes mastery had been clearly delineated, and 5) the establishment process for reporting student mastery of general education student learning outcomes has been completed.

*Methods of Assessing Writing Competencies*

Beginning in the spring of 1999, the University began assessing freshman students after the completion of English 102, the second required course on written expression. This assessment is in the form of an examination called the "English Proficiency Examination" (EPE). The General Education Assessment Committee, along with the faculty of the English department developed a plan of action for the administration and scoring of this examination.

As of fall 2000, approximately seven hundred seventy-two (772) students have taken English 102 and have been eligible to take the EPE. Eighty-five percent (85%) of the students taking the examination have completed the examination successfully. Approximately 5% of the students did not take the examination and 10% of the students were not successful on the examination. UMES requires these students to attend a six-week non-credit workshop to prepare them for taking the EPE. After the completion of the workshop, each student is assessed for his/her eligibility to take the EPE. Students who do not demonstrate the rudimentary skills deemed necessary to pass the EPE are not allowed to take the examination. These students are required to re-enroll in the non-credit EPE workshop. Presently we have 96% success rate for students taking the EPE after attending the EPE workshop.

It was revealed that fifty-six (56), or 7%, of the students who successfully completed English 102 failed the EPE. Even though this is a small percentage, a review of the course, English 102, is currently underway.

*Assessment of Writing Competencies*

The assessment advisory committee has established a plan for measuring the writing competencies of undergraduate students beyond their general education sequence. The committee has proposed and has implemented writing across the curriculum policy. This policy requires that writing be a task required by the discipline-specific faculty. Each department was required to identify at least one course in each program to be designated as courses where writing and the evaluation of written expression would be the responsibility of the department. Each department established its criteria for writing excellence and to verify that each student meets the writing standards as identified by the general education student learning outcomes for written expression.

*Retention Analysis*

Several initiatives have taken place to improve student retention. The University has created the position of full-time Director of Retention. A follow-up Retention Management Program review was completed by the Noel Levitz consulting firm during 1999-2000 academic year. Several major initiatives which have been implemented include: 1) the administering of a retention survey to all incoming first-time, full-time students to ascertain their academic, social needs and their proneness to be "at-risk", and 2) modification of the structure of our freshman first year transition class.

*Departmental Outcomes Assessment*

All degree programs have established a framework for measuring student-learning outcomes. The arduous task of specifying the knowledge and skills imparted by a university education has been undertaken with the most success in those degree programs that prepare students for specific professions, such as health disciplines, education and business – largely because those professions require licensure or are sanctioned by special accrediting agencies that ask for precise outcomes.

The selected assessment methods and criteria for each degree program vary. The range of assessment methods included: 1) capstone courses; 2) embedded assessment; 3) portfolio assessment; 4) student oral presentation; 5) student papers and projects; 6) department specific tests; and 7) exit interviews.

**University Of Maryland University College**

University of Maryland University College (UMUC) employs a variety of mechanisms to assess student learning outcomes. Among the most productive are capstone courses, student course evaluations, placement assessments, alumni surveys, and attrition and comparative course withdrawal studies.

UMUC now requires *capstone courses*, in which students are required to demonstrate skills acquired throughout the academic program, in most management-related degree programs. The capstone for UMUC's graduate international management program is especially noteworthy in that it places students in an actual Maryland business for the purpose of helping the business to enter an international market.

UMUC has made changes to its ongoing *student course evaluation* system. First, the system has been centralized in order to expedite the sharing of evaluation data with the research and faculty training staffs. Second, student participation has been greatly increased by making the evaluation form available online.

The increase in online enrollments has prompted UMUC to modify another of its assessment instruments, the *alumni survey*. The survey has been redesigned to capture student feedback about their online experiences in addition to other measures.

As a participant in the U.S. Department of Education's Distance Education Demonstration Project, UMUC has begun a number *of attrition and comparative withdrawal studies* focused on the retention characteristics of online vs. face-to-face students. UMUC has also initiated a faculty grant program with a special emphasis on assessment.

UMUC has made several significant program changes in response to assessment of student outcomes and other factors. Among these changes are a move from undergraduate specializations to undergraduate majors, and the addition of a new specialization in the area of Computer Information Technology. In addition, UMUC is moving toward ensuring student technology fluency by requiring an online library skills course for all students.

**Morgan State University**

**Part I: Institutional Impact Assessment**

**Strengthening Programs and Services**

The Office of Technology Training Services has been centrally located, and personnel are working more closely with faculty to coordinate training sessions. One of the programs that is used enables faculty to enhance their courses with Web-based materials and activities.

A committee of eighteen members of the *Department of English and Language Arts* formed to address a number of issues aimed at improving learning outcomes at Morgan. Three areas they undertook were (1) the revision of the Freshman English Syllabus, (2) increasing the effectiveness of diagnostic testing, and (3) improving the English Writing Center.

Mentor Programs: There are two mentor programs underway, one for traditional aged students and one for students over twenty-five who are returning to school. The Counseling Center also offers support groups and programs to deal with issues such as time-management, study skills, and relationships and participates in national screening days aimed at identifying conditions, such as alcoholism or depression, with a view toward offering counseling help that would help the student to remain in school and have a successful term.

Honors Program: There have been steady increases in the number of students who meet the Honors criteria over the years. While it is uncommon for students to have a perfect grade point average, the number who do have a 4.0 average has tripled since 1996, and the number of students whose SAT scores range from 1300 to 1600 has consistently increased in the past five years.

**Surveys Undertaken**

***A number of surveys were conducted to determine the effectiveness of Morgan's programs.***

***Graduating Senior Survey: Responses indicated that there has been a steady increase in the percentage of students who have a job at the time of their graduation, and that the majority work in fields related to their major course of study.***

Alumni Survey: The latest survey results indicate that 75% of alumni reported that their job preparation was excellent or good; 81% reported that their overall preparation for graduate or professional school was excellent or good, and 68% indicated that they would attend Morgan if they had the choice to make again.

Employer Survey: Alumni were asked to supply the name and address of their current employer and to approve the university's request to interview their supervisor. Results demonstrated that

most Morgan alumni were perceived as falling in either the *excellent* or *good* categories.

**Quantitative Measurements of Progress**

***Enrollment***

Student enrollment has increased by 6% over the past five years. In 1996 enrollment was 5,889. In 2000, it had increased to 6,269 for the combined undergraduate and graduate enrollment. The College of Liberal Arts increased its student enrollment by .6%, while the School of Business and Management went up 20% in the last five years. The School of Computer Mathematical and Natural Sciences increased enrollment at the baccalaureate level by 7.5%. Engineering was up 14%. The School of Education and Urban Studies showed a slight enrollment decrease of 2% since 1996.

***Retention***

*Retention has improved steadily over the years. Approximately forty percent of entering students graduate in six years.*

***Faculty with Terminal Degrees***

Student learning is improved as the quality and expertise level of faculty grows. One tangible way to measure faculty strength is through the number who hold terminal degrees in their field. In 1980, the percentage of faculty with terminal degrees was 48%. In 1988, it was 67%. In the year 2000, 89% of faculty had terminal degrees in their respective fields.

Bachelor Degrees Awarded

Morgan awards a greater number of bachelor degrees to African American students than any other public institution in the State of Maryland. In the past five years, the overall number of Bachelor's degrees awarded increased by a percentage point (from 704 to 712). Master's degrees increased by 11% (from 93 to 105), and doctorate degrees went from 3 in 1996 to 11 in the Spring of 2000, a 73% increase. The three areas of study that accounted for the most degrees awarded were Business, Education, and Engineering.

**Part II: Programmatic Assessment**

Each department at Morgan administers a comprehensive exam at the conclusion of the major's senior year. In order to graduate, students must score 70 or better in their major. The tests given are primarily developed in-house, but during the course of the student's study, certain national exams are administered as well. Some departments call for the successful completion of a senior project as a part of their graduation requirements.

## St. Mary's College of Maryland

St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM) has many assessment activities in place for the ongoing monitoring and guidance of its programs and operations. These range from diagnostic testing administered to entering first-year students to surveys of one-, five-, and ten-year-out alumni. A concise presentation of these various forms of assessment is presented as an assessment matrix (Appendix A of the main report). In this matrix, eight domains for assessment (Student Learning, Faculty Teaching, Faculty Other, etc.) are crossed with five types of assessor (Student, Faculty, Administration, etc.). Nearly every cell in the matrix indicates at least one form of assessment activity, and most cells contain several. Only two cells ("Student assessment of Alumni" and "Faculty assessment of Residence Life") do not contain methods for assessment.

Assessment activities at St. Mary's are reviewed by the College's Assessment Committee. Faculty representatives from each of the College's main academic divisions serve on this committee along with certain key administrators who are involved with assessment efforts. This committee acts as a resource to the various academic departments and provides a forum for the discussion of assessment results.

### Part I: Institutional Impact of Assessment

The constant assess-and-review procedures presented in the assessment matrix have resulted in several campus-wide changes. Several areas of impact are presented below.

***St. Mary's Project.*** The St. Mary's Project (SMP) is a culminating research or creative expression project performed by a student under the close supervision of a faculty mentor. The SMP has been subjected to annual evaluations by both faculty and students. Each academic department is currently reviewing its own objectives and the feedback obtained from student and faculty surveys to determine whether an SMP should be required or optional. This is an ongoing process with each department reserving the right to reverse its decision regarding an SMP requirement pending any new developments revealed through future assessments.

***Portfolio Sorting.*** Portfolio sorting, an assessment technique devised and first implemented at St. Mary's College of Maryland, has been used to assess the impact of a college education on such important outcome variables as Critical Thinking and Organizational Skills. Initiated in 1995, this year's portfolio sorting session revealed a significant improvement in Critical Thinking between the freshman and senior years and a marginally significant improvement in Organizational Skills. Certain methodological problems were noted with this year's portfolio sorting session and recommendations for improvement were formulated.

***Enrollment and Retention.*** SMCM had its largest entering freshman class in Fall 2000, and this will be followed by another record-setting entering class in Fall 2001. Some of this success in recruiting may be attributed to a thorough review and assessment of our

recruiting and admissions processes. As part of this assessment, consultants were hired and recommendations implemented.

For several years, SMCM has experienced the highest retention and graduation rates of any four-year public institution of higher learning in Maryland. A selective group of entering students as well as effective programs in student advising and other support areas can be credited with much of this success. In addition, an aggressive program of survey and other research provides important information to our support personnel to better inform their efforts. For example, our Office of Institutional Research recently analyzed survey and other data and determined that a student's place of origin, in-state or out-of-state, has a fairly large impact on retention at SMCM, with out-of-state students being at higher risk for attrition. This finding has initiated much discussion about actions that might be taken to improve our retention of out-of-state students.

***Survey Research.*** A major source of feedback about the college experience is provided by our program of survey research. Data are gathered concerning the college experience, from before students actually arrive on campus (the *Admitted Student Questionnaire*) to the 10-year-out *Alumni Survey*. Between these two extreme measurement points, the College routinely administers the *Freshman Student Information Form* (the *CIRP*), the *National Survey of Student Engagement* (*NSSE*), the *Instructor and Course Evaluation System* (*ICES*), the *Residence Life Survey*, a *Senior Exit Survey*, and 1- and 5-year-out *Alumni Surveys*. Additional surveys are conducted as needed to help inform policy making and decisions.

***Professional licensure and certification.*** The 5- and 10-year-out alumni surveys showed that over 50% of our alumni had obtained, or were obtaining, graduate degrees. In addition, the College's Health Services Advisory Committee reports that 82 of the 90 (91%) students advised since 1993 were admitted for post-baccalaureate training in the health sciences. Our Education department also reports that 100% of its graduates in recent years passed the teacher certification exam.

**Part II: Programmatic Assessment**

Every academic program at St. Mary's engages in a self-study every five to eight years. Since 1998, the following academic departments have engaged in a self-study: Anthropology / Sociology, Music, Dramatic Arts, Philosophy and Religious Studies, Foreign Languages, Psychology, and Art. In addition, our Teacher Education program underwent a program review for the purpose of maintaining accreditation through the Maryland State Department of Education.

As a result of these program reviews, curricula have been modified, facilities have been upgraded, new faculty have been hired in areas identified as needing greater strength, and the content of certain courses has been modified according to review team recommendations. Specific outcomes are described for the areas of Art, Psychology, and Teacher Education.

# COMMUNITY COLLEGES

**Allegany College of Maryland**

The College measures the effectiveness of its educational programs at multiple levels, including: annual reports of enrollment, graduation, and success issued by the Maryland Higher Education System; annual institutional reports; surveys of high school students, currently enrolled students, non-continuing students, graduates, employers, and the general community; advisory committee feedback; external reviews by national or state accrediting bodies; faculty evaluation; student tracking systems; and internal study documents. The data gathered from these efforts suggest that the College is serving its educational mission well but also suggest areas where the College is presented with new challenges. This report details the specific ways in which this assessment data has been used to produce innovation and change. The major categories of assessment data and strategies that are being implemented are organized into the following categories: (1) Enrollment and Access, (2) Placement and Developmental Education, (3) Retention and Graduation, (4) Instructional Environment, and (5) Program Evaluation.

Allegany College has experienced steady credit enrollment decreases since 1993. Fall 2000 saw the first headcount increase in 8 years but full-time equivalent enrollment continues to decrease. Through studies of enrollment data, the college has ascertained that the number of out-of-state, traditional, full-time, day, and transfer program students has remained steady or risen. However, enrollment of in-county, non-traditional, evening, and career students has decreased. To counter these trends, the College has adopted several initiatives to improve recruitment of statewide career students, lessen the financial burden for particular categories of students (e.g., Early College students, Nursing students), and increase geographical access to College facilities.

The College has implemented assessment activities to determine the effectiveness of its academic placement and developmental education program. Internal reports (*IR Research Brief: Developmental Education Report*) show that the remediation needs of students are increasing, particularly in the area of mathematics. In FY 1999, the College began to experiment with blended instruction and other new instructional methods appropriate for at-risk students. This project was expanded in FY 2000, and in FY 2001 several faculty participants wrote a successful FIPSE (Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education) grant designed to infuse developmental math coursework with problem-based learning methods. These efforts have been complemented with new and revised developmental coursework and additional student services such as professional tutorial assistance, classroom assistants, and developmental advisors for students with strong developmental education needs.

Student attrition and retention studies are performed regularly at the College in order to determine why students leave the institution. The data collected from these efforts suggest that there may be more the college can do to promote retention and graduation. Survey data show that financial considerations are a major factor in student decisions to discontinue studies. Moreover, in recent years, there has been an increase in the amount of time needed to complete an associate's degree. Lastly, the percentages of matriculating students who transfer to a four-year college within a four-year period has declined slightly. In addition to the

initiatives reported above, the College has responded with new efforts in the areas of tutorial assistance, academic alert, and career exploration services.

The learning environment is the primary focus of college continuous improvement efforts. Data gathered through present efforts show that ratings of teacher quality and instructional atmosphere are high and steady and confirm that the college has been successful in creating an excellent learning environment. Still, the College has continued its proactive efforts to improve instruction and student learning. The biggest campus effort to impact the learning environment during the past three years has been a campus-wide Learning Communities initiative. There are four goals to guide the development of this initiative, including: (1) to prepare students with work force relevant skills; (2) to motivate and retain students to achieve their career goals, (3) to implement learner-focused teaching methods and assess competency performance standards, and (4) to create a sense of community and connectiveness among faculty, staff, and students that support the teaching/learning process.

In the area of program improvements, the College uses various types of assessment information, including a new Program Performance Standard Model piloted during the Spring 2000 semester. The Model included the following data elements: Applications and registrations, graduates, job placement, graduate and employer satisfaction, and area employment needs. Program Directors provide a synopsis of program trends and initiatives to increase application, enrollment, retention, satisfaction, and graduation in instances where they have receded. This information is compiled in the Program Review System Report and reviewed by the Vice-President of Instructional Affairs. Because the system is relatively new, it is too early to assess its effectiveness in spurring program improvements.

The lion's share of program improvements occur as a result of continuous program assessments undertaken in order to maintain program quality for accreditation. Self-study is an important component of this process. During the period 1998-2001, five occupational programs underwent self-study. These programs include: Occupational Therapy Assistant (1999), Dental Hygiene (1999), Respiratory Therapy (1999), Nursing (2000), and Physical Therapist Assistant (2001). As part of self-study each program is mandated to describe assessment efforts and explain how assessment has resulted in program changes and improvements. Many improvements in faculty development, teaching quality, student resources, curriculum, and facilities were reported in these self-studies.

Anne Arundel Community College

- **Learning Outcomes Assessment Commitment:** During the last two years, Anne Arundel Community College has built the appropriate infrastructure, systems, and processes that foster and sustain a progressive learning college model. Specifically, the College has:

- Reorganized instructional components of the College (i.e. academic and continuing education / workforce development) into one teaching/learning unit - The Learning Division - led by one Vice President and a Council of Instructional Deans. Bringing all instruction under one umbrella assures clarity and consistency in curricula/instructional planning, delivery, and assessment.

  - Reorganized student learning resource and support functions (i.e. formerly student services, student development/academic assistance services, library and learning resources, and technological learning support services) into one organizational unit - The Division of Learner Support Services. Community college learners require an array of proactive support services to foster and sustain learning and facilitate a unified approach to student learning outcomes achievement.

- Developed a competencies based assessment as learning model, assessment action plan, and a faculty Handbook for Assessing Student Learning. These are the essential prerequisites for assuring systematic learning outcomes assessment at the institutional, programmatic/discipline, and course levels and direct integration of assessment results into the program and course improvement and planning processes.

- Activated the Wisconsin Instructional Design Software System (WIDS) for course level learning assessment; initiated college wide faculty/staff training on the use of WIDS to assure format cohesiveness and consistency in the development of new outcomes based course curricula as well as redesign of existing courses to specify learning objectives, outcomes, and assessment methodologies.

- Created a Director of Learning Outcomes Assessment position to work closely with the Council of Instructional Deans, academic department chairs, and individual department faculty in implementing learning outcomes assessment systematically across the curriculum and incorporating learning outcomes measurement as the central core process within the College's institutional effectiveness assessment system.

- **Institutional Learning Competencies:** The College established eight core college wide competencies that all students are expected to demonstrate upon completion of their course of study at Anne Arundel Community College.

**Institutional Competencies**

- **Communication:** Demonstrate ability to communicate effectively in verbal, nonverbal and written forms. Includes the ability to use appropriate technology that supports or facilitates communication.
- **Scientific, Mathematical and Technological Ability:** Demonstrate ability to collect, organize, compute and interpret quantitative and qualitative data and/or information. Demonstrate the ability to apply mathematics, science and technology to make decisions.
- **Critical thinking and Problem Solving:** Demonstrate ability to think critically and to solve problems using basic research, analysis and interpretation.
- **Information Literacy and Research:** Demonstrate ability to identify, locate and use informational tools for research purposes.
- **Social and Civic Responsibility:** Demonstrate ethical and cultural awareness, an understanding of cultural diversity and effective and appropriate modes of social interaction.
- **Holistic Perspectives on the Nature of Human Knowledge:** Demonstrate knowledge of the relationship(s) among the arts, sciences and technology.
- **Global Perspective:** Demonstrate understanding of the value of a global perspective on society with respect to past, present and future events.
- **Self-Management and Wellness:** Demonstrate knowledge of health maintenance and wellness.

**Baltimore City Community College (BCCC)**

Part I: Institutional Impact of Assessment

College Mission and Institutional Goals

BCCC's Strategic Plan is built around its mission statement: "To educate and train a world-class workforce for Baltimore." BCCC reviews vast amounts of data to determine the best way to fulfill our mission. Through data from surveys, accreditation studies, placement tests, course outcomes, credit and non-credit enrollment trends, environmental scans, BCCC's Institutional Performance Accountability Report, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Maryland Office of Planning, Maryland Association of Community College (MACC), MHEC, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and Baltimore City Public School System (BCPSS), BCCC developed its 2002-2004 Strategic Plan with institutional goals in six areas: 1) Retention, 2) Enrollment, 3) Transfer, 4) Job placement, 5) GED pass rate, and 6) Business clients.

**Retention and Transfer**

Retention is at the heart of Goals 1, 2, and 3 and is BCCC's biggest challenge. Based on BCPSS data; retention and success rates; course outcomes; enrollment trends; and testing and survey data, improving student retention is BCCC's highest strategic priority. The Quality Circle on Retention, Phase 2 focused on increasing retention via reengineering developmental education. Thus, Learning Communities were piloted and had a fall-to-fall retention rate 17% higher than that of the control group and will be expanded this Fall. The Council on Student Retention now reviews retention initiatives and focuses on improving developmental course outcomes via enhanced support services, especially for MAT 80. The new Advisement Center Director has reduced the advisor-to-student ratio and increased advisement frequency and quality. A computerized Goal Attainment Plan ensures students see advisors before registering. Links between the classroom, counseling, and the library are key, especially in PRE 100.

BCCC's average student is 29 years of age, works, attends part-time, has children, and has limited resources. BCCC offers expanded services to address these challenges including the Weekend College, distance education courses, "Evening Service Centers," flexible schedules, credit/non-credit share courses, programs to be offered entirely on-line, off-campus sites, and new transfer articulation agreements. BCCC is planning cultural arts programs and "gathering places" for both campuses to promote campus-involvement for part-time students.

Improving customer service is linked to retention and is a strategic priority. Survey data led to six action items: 1) schedule classes at convenient times, 2) improve safety and security, 3) improve communication between and among departments, 4) enhance job placement and career planning services, 5) implement telephone protocols, and 6) simplify registration.

**Enrollment**

Based on retention and workforce data, BCCC has scholarships designed to attract more students into high-growth fields. To attract academically prepared students, BCCC will offer merit-based scholarships, the Granville T.Woods Scholars Program (focused on programs for high-demand fields), and increase its Honors Program courses in 2002.

***Job Placement***

DBED projects that several occupations will experience huge growth and BCCC has programs to feed into all of them. To ensure completion of the education required for these programs, new short-term career training options and transfer agreements are being developed. BCCC has partnered with six other community colleges, MHEC, MACC, and DBED to form

the Greater Baltimore Business Training Network to serve emerging and expanding businesses in targeted industry sectors.

GED Pass Rate

In FY 2000, BCCC's GED program enabled 120 students to pass the State GED exam. Due to workforce needs, BCEC developed customized GED programs for staff of area employers.

**Business Clients**

Based on surveys, advisory board input, and job projections, BCEC has many customized training programs and strong partnerships with DBED, BCPSS, Housing Authority of Baltimore City, Baltimore Development Corporation, Empower Baltimore Management Corporation, Greater Baltimore Alliance, Mayor's Office of Economic Development, and Greater Baltimore Committee.

## II. Programmatic Assessment

**Developmental Courses**

Approximately one-third of all BCCC student credit hours are taught in developmental courses and BCCC has the highest proportion in the State of high school graduates requiring remediation. To improve the passing rate, the material covered in MAT 80 was reduced from that of a four-credit course to a three-credit course.

**Recruitment**

Based on BCPSS's high dropout rates, BCCC provides BCPSS students with a wide array of community service activities that foster the desire for higher education such as open houses, workshops, seminars, clinics, fairs, cultural events, and scholarship opportunities.

***Workforce Needs***

The Business department added a new e-commerce course and UNIX certificate; new short business skills-focused certificates; and adapted several courses for on-line delivery due to industry data, employment projections, and advisory boards' recommendations. The Information Technology Institute is being planned based on job projections and the *Maryland Employers' Workforce Preparedness Survey* data. Industry requests led BCCC to develop a Construction Supervision AAS program and BCEC to institute a joint information technology program for three businesses. BCCC created a Teacher Education and Certification Program based on a needs assessment of 1600 provisionally certified BCPSS teachers. BCCC also has a new partnership with Head Start based on a survey conducted of Head Start staff regarding their course needs.

***Curriculum Changes***

Due to changing job and academia requirements, critical thinking exercises have been added to every nursing course. The Nursing Program increased review courses, tutoring, mentoring, and practice tests to increase licensing exam-passing rates, which reached 97.4% in 2000. The Dietary Manager and Dietetic Technician programs implemented a computer-based case study review, curriculum enhancement, more comprehensive final exams, and additional course requirements. Due to declining passing rates, changes in the field, and student input, the Respiratory Therapy program was voluntarily suspended. The curriculum was updated and it was renamed Respiratory Care. In 1999 and 2000 licensing exam pass rates were 100%.

Budget

BCCC's Board of Trustees approved nearly $1.9 million for FY 2002 supporting initiatives listed in this report reflecting a commitment to student success. Initiatives approved are: 1) Information Technology, 2) Academic and Student Support Programs, 3) Marketing and Student Recruiting, 4) Additional Faculty, and 5) Projects in Support of BCPSS.

**Carroll Community College**

Over the past decade, Carroll Community College has demonstrated an increased commitment to and understanding of learning outcomes assessment. Early initiatives in this area have included clarification and standardization of course level objectives, standardization of outcomes reporting formats, and development of the Core Competencies (a set of knowledge, skills, and abilities to be acquired during the Carroll experience). Under the direction of the Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee, Carroll continues to refine its understanding of the meaning and purpose of learning outcomes assessment.

Learning outcomes cannot be measured through head counts, student persistence data, graduation rates, grade point averages, or other traditional measures of student success. Carroll continues to evaluate these indicators as a part of the institution wide assessment and accountability program. (While not measures of student learning, these are key indicators of the efficiency and viability of the institution.) However, learning outcomes assessment is an activity centered in the instructional area. Learning outcomes assessment measures and evaluates the impact of instruction on student learning.

Learning outcomes assessment is a recursive process. The first step in the process is the identification of the learning goals, at the course, program, and institutional level. The second step involves measurement of student attainment of these goals using subjective and objective data, nationally normed as well as instructor designed instruments. Actual student learning is periodically compared to anticipated learning. The critical phase of learning outcomes assessment occurs when the data is used to make changes to the curriculum in order to improve student learning. At this point, the process begins again, with the clarification of learning goals and measurement of the effectiveness of curricular changes.

Carroll Community College's model views learning outcomes assessment as an ongoing activity that occurs at multiple levels:

- *Across the Curriculum*
  The cumulative impact of instruction will be evaluated. In an attempt to assess student achievement of Core Competencies, a sample of students will be evaluated at admission, after 30 credits, and upon graduation. The Educational Testing Service's Academic Profile will provide key data in this area of assessment.
- *General Education Area*
  All courses in the same General Education area will share common Core Competencies. Assessment criteria, as well as an implementation plan, will be developed.
- *Program Level*
  Programmatic assessment has occurred at Carroll in a variety of formats over the past decade. The college is refining the format for program level assessment of Core Competencies, as well as other key learning goals, for programs of study (leading to associate's degrees or certificates).

- *Departmental Level*
  Originally, program level and departmental level assessment has been done using the same template. A new format for departmental assessment is being developed which will focus on assessment of common Core Competencies.
- *Course Level*

The most extensive implementation of learning outcomes assessment has been at the course level. Assessment data has been derived from instructor-developed tests and assignments, standardized departmental examinations, externally produced standardized examinations, and departmental questionnaires. In the future, student attainment of both Core Competencies and individual course objectives will be assessed. Faculty will be encouraged and mentored in the use of appropriate assessment instruments as well as the use of assessment data to foster curricular change.

At the heart of Carroll Community College's learning outcomes assessment model is the belief that the true goal of learning outcomes assessment is to improve the student learning process. Through assessing student achievement at the course, department, program, general education, and curriculum level, Carroll will continue to work towards the continual improvement of the instructional program.

**Community College of Baltimore County**

The colleges (Catonsville, Dundalk, and Essex) that were combined into The Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) had a history of strong outcome assessment programs. Faculty and staff at those campuses made significant contributions to the state's initial set of performance accountability indicators and developed a number of nationally recognized outcome assessment projects. In the past three years, the CCBC has been able to build upon these efforts and to use the best practices in evaluation, surveys, and assessment more efficiently and more consistently at all sites. This year's Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Report describes those assessment programs and traces their recent impact on policy and practices, and their impact on student learning at CCBC.

The college's Middle States Accreditation Self-Study is currently evaluating how the college conducts these assessments, how it measures its strengths and opportunities for improvement, and how the college is using its assessment programs. That self-study has found a thorough program for assessment and has identified a number of noteworthy projects that have had significant impacts on the college's pursuit of its LearningFirst Strategic Plan. Further documentation of these studies and their impact can be found in the Chancellor's Annual Accountability Reports to the board of Trustees.

- Creation of a new General Education Program at CCBC—the college has used its assessment of students to establish new goals for the general education of all its students. The faculty, in response to a new vision of general education, has developed strong new learning objectives for each of the core courses that comprise its general education program.
- Learning Outcomes Assessment Program—Each year the colleges initiates 15 course outcome assessment projects. These faculty projects involve an externally validated outcome measure of learning, an course change strategy, and a re-test of learning outcomes.
- Academic planning—The college is one of 12 colleges in the nation to be chosen to be part of the funded Vanguard Program. This program encourages CCBC to continue its progress in planning and organizational change, and pushes the college to take a national leadership role in helping other colleges to understand and implement its approach to becoming a learning college. The college's approach to planning has also recently prestigious Bellewether Award.
- Program Review Process—The college has initiated a systematic approach to monitoring the strengths of it's academic programs that annually monitors program indicators and ensures that each program undertakes a thorough self-study every five years. These self-studies are coordinated with the professional accreditation studies that are required to remain nationally recognized.

## Cecil Community College

The performance accountability process gives the Board of Trustees of Cecil Community College (CCC) primary responsibility for monitoring student learning outcomes. The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) retains the option of seeking progress reports on learning outcomes. The Commission, under this process, requires a report every three years on the CCC progress in improving student learning, instructional effectiveness, and curriculum. This student learning outcomes assessment report has two sections.

Part I, Institutional Impact of Assessment, uses information the college prepared for the Middle States accreditation review in 1999 and the evaluation team report to describe the ways in which assessment of student learning has affected the educational process. In addition to describing the college's response to the Middle States recommendations, this section also discusses ongoing successful assessment plans and new assessment initiatives. This section describes a number of actions that have resulted from the examination of information obtained from a variety of methods in addition to the Middle States report. These methods include but are not limited to, locally designed assessment instruments, portfolios, standardized instruments (including tests and surveys), FOCUS groups, and locally developed survey instruments.

The most significant ways in which the ongoing assessment of student learning has impacted the educational process at the college and that have resulted in changes in institutional expectations are briefly described in this section. Nine overarching areas are included as examples. The areas described include program review; basic skills assessment; graduation, transfer, and employment outcomes; student evaluation of instruction; enrollment management; retention studies; strategic planning; facilities planning and institutional research.

Part II, Programmatic Assessment, highlights the major changes and improvements that have taken place in three selected academic programs as a result of assessment of student learning outcomes. These areas include academic program review, teacher education reform, and nursing reaccredidation. Two additional programs, general education and developmental education are cited as examples of programs with an impact on student learning that reaches across a number of programs at the college.

**Chesapeake College**

The ***Chesapeake College Strategic Plan***, including its recently revised Mission Statement, make clear the College's commitment to student learning and the assessment of student learning. The College, which serves a large five-county area on the Upper Shore, visualizes its role as that of a regional learning center with a focus on student learning and a commitment to assist students to reach their full potential. As stated in its Vision Statement, the College seeks to "assure access to a comprehensive array of programs and services, responsive to the needs of individual learners and to the requirements of the region's work force." This vision is aligned with the ***Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education*** with its emphasis on distinctiveness, access, economic development, and on undertaking "activities to focus on student learning."

As an expression of its commitment, the College has maintained a tradition of periodic review and assessment of student learning that is recorded in its institutional self-study documents for regional reaccredidation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools[1] and through the State's accountability reporting system. Middle States' *Handbook on Periodic Review* has a provision calling for "evidence of continuous institutional self-study and planning to include ... outcomes assessment," and its newly proposed revisions to accreditation guidelines detail both institutional assessment and student learning assessment standards.

The College is well positioned to provide information on its efforts to assess student learning. Assessment is embedded within goals expressed in the College's *Strategic Plan* and the process for implementing those goals.

- One major goal is to enhance "educational quality through strengthened curriculum and improved services using academic program review, self-study and accreditation, and continual assessment, including the use of student surveys."
- Another major initiative is to "develop student competencies for success" including review of the General Education and Developmental Studies programs.
- Another is to "establish an assessment program which utilizes a variety of tools to improve individual achievement and institutional effectiveness."

Very importantly, an annual operational planning process is being used to implement the Plan whereby all departments/units must link their yearly action plans to *Strategic Plan* initiatives. They must also establish performance indicators, or benchmarks, by which to evaluate their progress and provide an end-of-the-year assessment report. All departments/units must provide an operational plan each year, and in the academic and instructional support departments, student access and learning outcomes are the focus.

Other means by which assessment is carried out are through the Academic Program Review System, institutional governance committees, institutional and programmatic accreditation self-studies, reports to the Board of Trustees, federal and state accountability reports, management information systems for student, personnel and financial reporting, and a

[1] The College's regional accrediting body is the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Information from the College's *Periodic Review Report* (2000) was used in the preparation of this Report in accordance with MHEC guidelines shown in Appendix 1.

proactive program of institutional research including enrollment and graduation data, surveying, grade and testing information, and course/instructor evaluations. A directory of such sources is contained in Appendix 2.

What has been the impact of these assessments on educational processes?

- Assessment is embedded in the College's *Strategic Plan* and the annual operational planning process so that it occurs across all departments /units. It is the means by which the College measures its progress in achieving its goals.
- Assessment efforts were organized into an *Institutional Effectiveness Plan* in 1999.
- The General Education Program has been shaped by assessment, in the past in terms of development of a capstone course and student competencies, and currently in terms of faculty and student surveys and updates of competencies in relation to the *Strategic Plan*.
- The *Strategic Plan* and the College's revised mission statement endorse the importance of developing technological proficiencies in students, and efforts are underway to define those competencies as outcomes.
- An assessment of skills needed by faculty and staff to implement the *Strategic Plan* has taken place, and the training components within the College's innovative Professional Development Program have been designed to focus on them.
- Cohort analyses, transfer enrollment patterns, alumni perceptions and employment rates generally paint a picture of student success.
- Review of developmental studies is an ongoing process that has been influenced by statewide efforts to standardize test instruments and score cutoffs and has resulted in substantive curricular and policy changes.
- Analyses of student enrollment patterns and market share information have focused attention on the need for better enrollment management, an initiative identified in the *Strategic Plan* and under development.
- Academic programs are using different kinds of assessment to improve student learning—tests, program reviews, surveys, etc. Some examples include the nursing program's adoption of diagnostic testing and supplementary instruction to improve student learning; efforts in the teacher education program to prepare transfer students for meeting new requirements; and streamlining areas of emphases within the liberal arts & sciences.

**Frederick Community College**

The concept of student learning has been woven into several primary research activities of the College, including general education assessment, program assessment, individual course assessments, and assessment of factors and dynamics influencing student retention. Each activity is subsequently contributing to the College's understanding of factors which promote or impede students' learning as they progress toward their educational goals.

General Education Assessment

Current assessment of general education achievement levels in students is using the Academic Profile standardized test developed by the Educational Testing Service. This assessment will provide baseline data during Fall 2001 regarding student's achievement levels in reading, writing, mathematics and critical thinking. Preparation for this assessment has recently prompted a review and modification of the College's general education goals and objectives, and an inventory of its general education courses.

Program Assessment

Educational Programs at the College are routinely examined using a Comprehensive Assessment of Programs (CAP) process and a Career Program Viability Review. Combined, these assessments evaluate each program with respect to quality, cost, and need using indicators for each criterion. In addition, they determine the extent to which program goals are aligned with the College's educational mission, program courses support their own stated objectives, and that students in the programs are successful. Assessments to date have been instrumental in the discontinuance or restructuring of programs, the revision of programs' missions, goals, and objectives, and the rewriting of course syllabi to address needed learning outcomes for students.

Noteworthy are some of the recent substantial changes that have occurred in the College's Nursing, Aviation Maintenance, and Distance Education Programs. These include restructuring of the Nursing curriculum and assessment of strategies to emphasize a holistic approach to wellness, extensive use of problem-based learning, and the importance of critical thinking; restructuring of the Aviation curriculum to correct student deficiencies in program content, mathematics, and technology literacy; and re-organizing the College's Distance Education program to address identified obstacles to both program and student success.

Course-Level Assessment

A recently implemented Mini-Grant Program for individual course assessment has been instrumental building on the assessment interests of faculty. Current initiatives have focused on evaluating writing across the curriculum, comparing student achievement in traditional and non-traditional instruction formats, and using a pre/post-test strategy to assess student's achievement of course core learning outcomes. In addition to the above, a review of student course evaluations has initiated a review of the types of student information which the College gathers.

Student Retention

Eight recently-identified retention goals have focused the College's approach to student retention. Those goals have been instrumental in the identification of special advisors, the development of an orientation framework, and the creation of a seminar course for incoming freshmen.

## Garrett Community College

In 1999 Garrett Community College (GCC) began the formal implementation of an outcomes assessment plan which was designed to measure the instructional effectiveness of its general education program as required by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSA). In addition to reviewing quantitative measures of student success, GCC faculty affirmed the importance of researching qualitative measures of academic assessment which would evaluate instructional effectiveness, the establishment of high and rigorous standards throughout the institution, and the achievement of general educational outcomes.

Being a small community college, GCC was able to involve all of the full time faculty and a segment of its adjunct faculty in the development of its Outcomes Assessment Plan for General Education. GCC's Outcomes Assessment Plan for General Education was submitted to Middle States Association on March 27, 2000. Seven areas of general education are identified:

Communication Skills
Critical Thinking
Problem Solving
Mathematics and Logic
Technological Literacy
Cultural and Global Perspective
Ethical Development

To achieve both quantitative and qualitative assessment, GCC elected to use multiple indicators including the following:

- enrollment data
- retention rates
- graduation trends
- transfer success rates
- student performance on the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP test)
- employer satisfaction surveys
- student evaluations of instruction

Specific information on these indicators is reported in Part I: Institutional Impact of Assessment. Garrett Community College's most significant accomplishments in assessing the outcomes of general education are summarized herein.

GCC's first endeavor in assessing the outcomes of general education was to initiate the administration of a standardized test to assess student learning in the basic skills areas of reading, English, and mathematics. The Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP), published by ACT, was selected, and student testing was implemented in April 1999.

The administration of the CAAP has continued (1999-2001); through student performance data reports provided by ACT, GCC has been able to objectively assess student achievement in these core learning areas which impact all areas of learning and achievement in general education courses.

As a small, rural community college, GCC recognizes the importance and need to provide a program whereby students will gain an understanding of and appreciation for cultural and global perspectives. A Co-Curricular Program, which focuses on exposing students to multiculturalism, was initiated in 1994. Through the co-curricular program students attend lectures, musical events, presentations, trips, etc. as a means of fulfilling GCC's diversity requirement. The co-curricular program is a faculty initiated program; faculty from all disciplines assist with the planning and scheduling of events approved by the Co-Curricular committee.

Global education is another vehicle for providing GCC students with a cultural perspective. Through the development of sister-city relationships between communities in Estonia and communities in western Maryland, Garrett Community College launched its first global education initiative in Fall semester 2001. Six Estonian students, enrolled in Spring semester, will be continuing their education at Garrett Community College in Fall semester 2001; new applicants from Estonia are currently being reviewed for admission. Although the College enrolled a few international students in past semesters, it is especially pleased with the success of its first formal arrangement with Estonia and the admission of these international students. They bring a new cultural dimension to the campus and provide an opportunity for personal interactions which Garrett's students had not previously experienced.

Data collected on a variety of measures, including credit enrollments, retention rates, graduation trends, student transfer success rates, employer satisfaction surveys, and student evaluations of instructional effectiveness provide positive quantitative assessment of GCC's outcomes measures. While the College will continue assessing student learning and outcomes in general education, the focus is currently on the completion of assessment plans for each transfer and career program. All full time faculty are involved in the development of these plans.

**Hagerstown Community College**

Since its last report in 1995, Hagerstown Community College has developed an outcomes assessment plan that is fluid and systems are evolving that embrace both academic and non-academic elements. The institutional impact of assessment is measured in various ways.

An Enrollment Management Executive Committee (EMEC) coordinates the College=s enrollment planning and evaluates the effectiveness of those plans through use of key success indicators, which include benchmarks for recruitment, enrollment, and retention. With student learning outcomes as a primary focus, the EMEC established a Retention Committee, as well as a Curriculum Assessment Committee in 2000.

The College uses reports and data from the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). Reports on retention, graduation and transfer are particularly helpful, as are the results of the biennial graduate follow-up surveys and accountability reports. Along with the MHEC studies and surveys, the College uses in-house surveys to gather information for the improvement of programs and student support services.

Graduates consistently indicate high degrees of satisfaction with the quality of instruction, job preparation and transfer preparation. When asked in graduate follow-up studies if their goals were achieved by the time they graduated, approximately 95% of the respondents in each graduate survey since 1990 have indicated that their goals were partly or completely achieved.

The College continues to focus on the challenge of general education outcomes. In Spring 2001, National Occupation Information Coordinating Council (NOICC) competencies were used as a guidepost to further develop and refine student outcomes in all academic divisions. The NOICC competencies, which have subsets that focus on writing, math application, reading, and critical thinking, are being applied in both general education and career programs.

Developmental studies have a positive impact on student achievement, satisfaction, and retention. To better assess, standardize, and monitor improvements in skill levels of incoming HCC freshmen, the College implemented COMPASS, a computerized assessment tool from American College Testing (ACT), in 1999. Exit testing is being conducted in English 099 and 100 to assure the attainment of a minimum competency level in English 101 (English Composition). Competencies in those courses were developed by English faculty. Since the implementation of COMPASS, as well as the creation of the Center for Academic Excellence in 1999, the retention rate of developmental students has increased by 5%.

Health Sciences graduates excel in licensure examinations. The percentage of nursing students who pass the licensing examination "on the first try" over the last five years has ranged from 85% to 100%, with a 100% passing rate when taken a second time. Radiography students have excelled over the same time period, with a passing rate of 93% to 100%, with 100% on the second try.

The Learning Communities initiative has focused on assessment and sponsored activities for faculty, including a workshop entitled "Where the Rubber Hits the

Road B Transformation through Innovation." The Learning Communities also has sponsored several activities in which public school teachers and College faculty discuss student readiness, expectations, outcomes, and articulation.

Perhaps the most important assessment process at any college is periodic program review. During academic year 2001, the Curriculum Assessment Committee conducted, with the help of a consultant, a curriculum assessment. Using a Learner Centered Curriculum model and qualitative data, fourteen programs were reviewed. Of those fourteen programs, two were maintained and five were eliminated. Seven programs will be revitalized, with outcomes being reviewed over the next academic year.

Program review is conducted by or in conjunction with an external accrediting or certifying agency as in the area of health sciences, which are outcomes based. Such reviews are conducted in Nursing, Radiography, Human Services and, eventually, the paramedic program, which began in fall 2000. Surveys and evaluations of clinical experience are used for curriculum development and modification. Competencies will be validated and measured through a certification examination for paramedics.

Since 1995, Hagerstown Community College has participated in a National Science Foundation (NSF) project to help community colleges better prepare students for the workforce, combining academic and work-skills training using CD-ROM technology. Courses that incorporate this technology include college algebra, engineering, physics, computer information systems, and oral communications. Competencies are measured using a video-based assessment tool. The project has had a positive impact on outcomes assessment at HCC. A longitudinal study that began in 1998 indicated that there was a 42% higher retention rate among the NSF students for the semesters between Fall 1997 and Spring 2000. NSF students have reported a high degree of satisfaction and achievement with the learning modules. Over the next year, the faculty involved in the NSF project will help others link assessment techniques they have learned to selected core courses.

A Career Development Task Force assessed HCC=s career development services. Integration with outcomes assessment was identified as a critical component to complement enrollment management initiatives. The development of outcomes and methods to measure the outcomes will be a priority in career development over the next year.

**Harford Community College**

Harford Community College (HCC) has implemented a comprehensive, progressive, and iterative process of student-learning outcomes assessment. This process is predicated upon identification of eight institutional outcomes which were approved through the college's governance process. This outcomes assessment requires that each program develop, through a five-step systemic assessment guide, processes, information gathering, and decision making to determine the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process and implement changes driven from the assessment of outcomes.

Additional elements contributing directly to assessment include a formal five-year program review process, curriculum advisory committees, Curriculum Committee review of instructional documentation processes, initial student assessment in English, math, and reading, and a parallel activity in the area of institutional effectiveness.

Implementation of this assessment process has already resulted in significant modification of programs, courses, syllabi, teaching strategies, and methodologies. It is expected that, over the next three years, this process will be phased in.

This report documents progress and strategies used to implement the comprehensive assessment of student-learning outcomes in HCC's divisions of nursing, allied health and physical education; business, computing, and technology; and educational studies.

**Howard Community College**

> *Howard Community College (HCC) creates an environment that inspires learning and the lifelong pursuit of personal and professional goals. The college provides open access and innovative learning systems to respond to the ever-changing needs and interests of a diverse and dynamic community. As a vital partner, HCC is a major force in the intellectual, cultural and economic life of its community.* (HCC Mission Statement)

This progress report illustrates how Howard Community College has improved student learning, instructional effectiveness, and curriculum over the past three years. It is compiled with input from key offices involved in monitoring outcomes assessment of student learning at the college. These include the office of the vice president of academic affairs, specifically the learning outcomes assessment office, and the planning, research and organizational development office.

As stated in the self-study report to the Middle States Association, "While we [HCC] do not approach change frivolously, the institutional culture does strongly encourage improvement."(p.2) The constants in the college continue to be change and innovation, underscored this year by the findings and charges brought forward by the Middle States review. Each year HCC faculty and staff use assessment projects to identify value-added activities to steer the college through the waves of mounting educational change. As HCC's enrollment grows (6% this year), time, money, staff, and physical space distributions must be reassessed often.

Part I: *Institutional Impact of Assessment* reviews information found in the Middle States accreditation review conducted at Howard Community College in FY2001 and highlights how the assessment of student learning has affected educational processes at HCC. HCC received a *commendable* rating from the Middle States Association for its self-study efforts.

Institutional assessment at HCC is composed of institutional surveys- IDEA (student evaluation of courses each semester), QUEST (annual employee satisfaction survey), YESS (annual student satisfaction survey) - and monthly examinations of segments of the board of trustees core ends (which includes all the mandated MHEC performance accountability indicators). Periodically, HCC conducts a general education assessment of entering and exiting students (Academic Profile). Performance gaps uncovered by this research are immediately considered and drive the area, unit, and individual work plans for the next performance review cycle.

Additionally, last year, the college committed to the use of the Baldrige framework for process improvement across the institution. This year the college plans to improve its procedures for 1) student selection for graduation, 2) crisis communication, and 3) computer disaster recovery. These audits will improve service to employees and students.

Part II: *Programmatic Assessment* outlines the major changes and improvements that have taken place in selected academic programs as a result of assessment of student learning

outcomes. The major vehicle for these changes is the Learning Outcomes Assessment Program, which, since 1992, has assisted in the administration and analysis of individual course, related groups of courses, and program assessments. This program has adapted to concerns brought forth in the Middle States self-study process (a need to increase the amount of "leverage" a faculty member has in finding the time, resources and intellectual capital to put into an assessment project) by hiring a 12-month researcher entirely devoted to assessment and empowering the division chair to remove marginal responsibilities from the faculty to create more time to devote to the assessment task.

Over 100 assessments have been conducted. Most projects involve a 3-year "test-implement-retest" cycle. Results have been good indicators of improved student learning, student attitude, and advances in instructional effectiveness and curriculum. Examples include – improving success rates in a general education biology course by 17%, adjusting the cut-off scores of the math placement exam to allow more students into college level math without sacrificing their probability of successful completion, and improving the writing ability of students across the curriculum.

For more details on these ongoing assessment programs please visit the board core end system at: http://www.howardcc.edu/hcc/plan&eval/boardends.htm and the learning outcomes assessment website at: http://www.howardcc.edu/tli/loa/ .

**Montgomery College**

**Introduction:** Montgomery College's last Middle States' report took a College wide approach, rather than a report from each campus. This Progress Report takes that same approach and incorporates examples of campus efforts into this one report. The College received the Middle States' evaluation team's response after the team visit March 29 - April 2, 1998. Throughout this Progress Report, comments made by the Middle States' team are highlighted in **bold letters** and a statement of the College's subsequent actions follow each team comment. The report also includes the College's response to internal assessment studies and its response to recommendations from the Council for the 21st Century.

PART I: INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT OF ASSESSMENT

Section A: Actions taken as a result of an assessment of enrollments, graduation, retention and transfer rates and subsequent Middle States' recommendations.

- **Implementation of and communication of the College's enrollment management plan. Efforts at enrollment management have led to a 2.44% increase in students and a 5.38% increase in credit hours.**
- Communication of the availability of tutorial services to students and the preparation of a tri-fold directory of the major student support centers at each campus.
- Inauguration, counseling/instruction, evaluation, and re-configuration of the Pathways Program for students with severe skill deficiencies.
- Continuance of efforts to meet the needs of the under prepared student, including many concerted efforts within the College's Learning Centers and Support Labs.
- Examination by English and AELP faculty of steps to make certain that the writing standards for native and for non-native speakers are equally rigorous. Included are 37 student workshops by area faculty in three areas: on preparing for the EN 101 competency essay, on grammar for AELP students, and on reading. A follow-up research project will be charged with making recommendations for changes in standards, if appropriate.
- Continued use of Accuplacer as the common assessment instrument. Also undertake work to determine the reliability of these standards, including meetings with College Board representatives to discuss specifications of the on-line Accuplacer test and review and modification of cutoff scores and course-placement procedures for the Accuplacer testing program.

*Section B: Actions Taken As A Result Of Survey Findings*

- **Continuation of the bi-annual graduate and employer surveys; survey reports will receive College wide distribution when completed.**

Section C: Actions Taken as a Result of Licensure or Certification Exams, Program Completion Data, Diagnostic Tests Results, Basic Skills Tests and Follow-Up of Remedial Students.

- Continuation of efforts to improve completion rates for women and African American, Asian and Hispanic students and conduct studies to better monitor their completion rates.
- Development of a research procedure to track students in developmental courses through

the completion of their first credit course.

**Student Evaluation of Teaching**

- Use of student evaluations of classroom performance from the Faculty Evaluation system. Evaluations are shared with the faculty member, the department chair and the appropriate academic dean for consideration during the annual evaluation conference.
- Use of the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory in spring 2000 as part of OIRA's support for an Enrollment Management and Institutional Advancement project. The survey results are being used to improve College services to students.
- Use of student evaluations by other College services to improve their operations.

**Part II - Programmatic Assessment - Changes and Improvements in Selected Programs**

- Revision of the Program and Discipline Review process through plans for the creation of a College wide Academic Master Plan and improved data collection, analysis and reporting procedures.
- Expansion of dialogue and collaboration with MCPS to help assure that students are adequately prepared for college level work and to provide professional development services to teachers.
- Development of proactive intervention strategies focusing upon the needs of all students and leading to the implementation of intervention positively impacting at-risk students.
- Creation of the Center for International and Multi-cultural Students to provide comprehensive information and services for international students.
- Introduction of strategies to improve retention and completion rates among majors in the Health and Exercise Science options.
- Development of "The Millennium Scholars," a restricted-enrollment program for older, part-time students to parallel the Montgomery Scholars program which is for full-time students straight out of high school.
- Introduction of special efforts by the Humanities areas College wide to expand horizons available to students and to increase awareness of the global nature of Montgomery College.
- Expansion of efforts to increase the Humanities related Honors Program
- Incorporation of technology into the curriculum with the development of the Humanities and Social Sciences Networked Suite in the Humanities Building (Rockville).
- Strengthening the Applied Geography program through the addition of the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) lab facility at Rockville as part of a partnership with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation that allows students to gain hands-on experience through internships.
- Introduction of a fully revised Fire Science curriculum.

Prince George's Community College

Prince George's Community College has had a commitment to the evaluation of its learning process. As such, the college has conducted ongoing assessment of specific programs through the Office of Planning and Institutional Research (formally the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis). In 1999, Prince George's Community College developed a process by which the assessment of general education became the focus of a college wide initiative.

Part I: Institutional Impact of Assessment

*Assessment of Career and Technical Programs*
The assessment of career and technical programs is driven primarily by the accreditation requirements within each occupational area. These requirements focus mainly on the success of students in acquiring the knowledge that it takes to be successful in their chosen field. Assessments show a consistency in the success rates of occupational students taking the licensure exams. Pass rates for graduates of Allied Health and Health Technology programs over the past four years have ranged from 67% percent to 95%.

*Assessment of Developmental Education*
Over the course of the past four years, the college has been able to complete several important studies concerning developmental education. Most recently, studies by the office of planning and institutional research suggest the possibility that successful completion of developmental mathematics *may* be influenced by successful completion of developmental reading in cases where students are required to take both. This exploration has sparked a dialogue among the developmental education faculty about the merits of requiring developmental reading as a prerequisite to developmental math. Until more research can be done in this area, the jury remains deadlocked on the matter.

*Assessment of General Education*
In the summer of 1999 Prince George's Community College began an extensive assessment of its general education program. As a result, seven core learning outcomes were defined as:

- Communicate effectively orally and in writing in standard English
- Apply appropriate methods of mathematics to solve problems
- Comprehend and interpret reading materials
- Understand and apply the methods, principles, and concepts of the natural and social sciences and the humanities
- Understand the nature and value of the fine and performing arts
- Use computer technology for communication and information retrieval
- Recognize and appreciate cultural diversity

The assessment includes an "institutional portfolio" of artifacts from four randomly selected sections of 13 to 15 heavily enrolled general education courses. A five member interdisciplinary team of faculty raters then scores the artifacts. Those scores are tabulated and reported back to department chairs for their review. Beginning in academic year 2001/2002,

departments will design assessment procedures for additional courses relating to their programs.

Part II: Programmatic Assessment

Developmental Math and Reading Course Review

In 1998, studies of the developmental education program convinced the faculty that students who complete the developmental sequence required of them, have a higher success rate in their subsequent mainstream classes than other students (even students for whom developmental education was never a requirement). During academic year 1998/99, a math review was piloted and assessed. The assessment showed that students who took the math refresher course were significantly more likely to pass subsequent developmental math courses than those students who did not take the math refresher. The encouraging results has prompted the developmental program faculty to add more sections of the math refresher to the course schedule as well as include for the first time a developmental reading refresher course during the spring of 2001.

$R^3$ Academy

In fall 2000, a halt was called to the program previously known as the $R^3$ Academy and currently called the Freshman Academy until an extensive assessment could be done on program outcomes to date. The office of Planning and Institutional Research undertook an assessment of the goals of the program as well as whether or not the program was indeed achieving its goals. Among the recommendations made as a result of the assessment included:

1. Create an interdisciplinary course as a part of the learning community to integrate programs and program faculty into the Academy model.
2. Control advising so course taking mirrors the goals that the learning-community model exemplifies.
3. Identify a target population for the Academy of students who could benefit more readily from the program.

As a result of this assessment, the Freshman Academy has been fully reorganized to include two semesters of integrated learning for students who are carefully targeted and interviewed prior to the program. Students qualify for the Freshman Academy based on placement into developmental reading, English, and mathematics as per their score on the Accuplacer.

## College of Southern Maryland

The College of Southern Maryland, formerly Charles County Community College, has been continuously engaged in several assessment activities to examine the institutional impact of enhancing the quality of instructional delivery to the students and further promote student learning.

To examine general education competencies in the categories of reading, writing, mathematics, computer, observation, learning, speaking, listening, interpersonal communication, reasoning, political/historical, cultural/social, economic, and natural/technological, 68 different general education courses have been surveyed. Some courses have been surveyed several times, for a total of 191 courses. Plans are in place to modify the 72 skill and knowledge competencies in each of the above categories as a result of the information derived from that research.

The performance of College of Southern Maryland transfer students at the four-year institutions in their first year has been better than average for the community colleges in the state. With the exception of the most recent cohort tracked (1997), the number of full-time freshmen has been increasing steadily. The overall success rates range from 58% to 47%.

The results of the student satisfaction survey of spring 2000 were compared to the MHEC 1998 graduate follow-up survey results, released in 1999, and the results of the ACT/AACC Faces of the Future survey administered in fall 2000. It was found that there was general agreement among the three groups of respondents that instruction at CSM was of high quality.

In the MHEC graduate follow-up survey, the majority of students, or 65%, cited transfer to a four-year college as the primary reason for attending CSM. This compares to the 62% in the student satisfaction survey who cited transfer to another college or university as their long-term goal. Therefore, improved skills, availability of resources, and quality of education play vital roles in achieving this goal. The overall ranking of students' satisfaction with instructional quality was slightly above the national norm in both surveys.

In fall 2000, CSM designed a comprehensive institution-wide model for assessing program outcomes. The model is designed to capture and document the objectives, outcomes, outcome measures, assessment methods and results. Individual academic programs are identifying each of these factors for reporting out as part of a program outcomes implementation, which is only now getting under way. In the implementation phase, each department will assess one program this spring. Course assessment will be initiated beginning next fall.

In the meantime, several programmatic changes are resulting from assessment initiatives begun since 1998. In order to improve the likelihood of student success in the nursing program and on the state licensing exam, the faculty have developed a High Risk Student Profile based upon assessment data from the last several years. Beginning in fall 2000 faculty identified at risk students early, are providing early intervention and monitoring their progress. In two years, when the cohort graduates, student success will be measured and successful intervention strategies incorporated into the program.

A comprehensive written plan for total program evaluation has been developed by the Nursing Department and was implemented in the fall of 1998. The evaluation process provides direction for the faculty to identify program strengths and weaknesses, recommend and /or implement changes, and establish new outcomes. In addition to the required outcomes, faculty addressed the optional outcomes of program satisfaction and professional development.

Faculty in several disciplines have utilized modules based upon the SCANS (Secretary's Commission on Acquiring Necessary Skills) competencies to develop students' skills in team building, decision-making and system design. The business faculty modified the learning activities in response to assessment results and will use the modules as program assessment tools.

Policies for placement, taking of tests, and the best practices for students with learning disabilities have been implemented. Department chairs are redesigning developmental courses to allow more flexibility and efficiency in the ways they are taken. This college has made a concerted effort to reduce the number of prerequisites and now has an ongoing process to examine the appropriateness and reliability of prerequisites.

Accordingly, a great deal of faculty effort and institutional financial resources were directed toward piloting a program utilizing Academic Systems developmental math software. The unique CSM approach to this course of study included a significant amount of tutorial help from math instructors aside from the course taken via computer.

Each of these assessment activities and resource commitments will ultimately increase students' learning and satisfaction with their educational experiences at the College of Southern Maryland.

*Wor-Wic Community College*

From the assessment efforts implemented at Wor-Wic Community College and statewide, specific significant innovations and changes have occurred over the past three years. These innovations and changes, and the impact they have had on the improvement of teaching and learning, the quality of programs and curriculum, academic planning and decision-making, the allocation of resources, and policies, procedures, services and structure, are reported herewith.

## Part I. Institutional Impact of Assessment

Changes to academic programs are the result of information gleaned from the state's program monitoring data reports, the annual program reviews, the program advisory committees, and the local advisory council. Information is also obtained from the general education assessment process when each prospective associate degree graduate is tested to determine the level of competency achieved concerning general education skills. The academic changes that have occurred at Wor-Wic Community College over the past three years are detailed in the report. Some of the highlights of these changes are:

- Expanded the college's general education objectives to include an objective dealing with information and computer literacy.

- Formed a committee to review the college's current learning outcomes assessment process and to make recommendations for a more comprehensive process.

- Based on the needs of the community, established three new credit programs, revised two other credit programs, and entered into a cooperative agreement with Chesapeake College to offer the surgical technology certificate program through distance education.

- Linked the criminal justice academy and credit criminal justice programs. As a result, students enrolled in the criminal justice law enforcement and corrections academy programs will be eligible for 21 and 7 credits, respectively, in the degree programs.

- As a result of nursing program curriculum changes, the student pass rate on the NCLEX-RN rose to 92%, which is above the state average.

- Regarding developmental education, implemented all of the recommended statewide diagnostic assessment tools and procedures to align them with the state recommendations, enlarged and upgraded the three developmental education laboratories, and expanded the function of the reading and study skills laboratory was expanded to allow for a testing center.

- Developed a list of core values for the college as underlying principles behind our individual, instructional, and institutional behavior and action.

## Part II. Programmatic Assessment

Over the past ten years, the college has slowly, but steadily moved into the arena of distance education and into using technology in the classroom. The college's first website was implemented in 1996, but was remained relatively unchanged until this past January. Projection systems were available for faculty use on carts through the media centers and in about 20 classrooms, but "smart" classrooms did not come into existence at the college until 1999. Our first distance education course, a telecourse, was taught ten years ago. Since that time the college has offered three courses as telecourses, five courses as online courses, and two courses as interactive courses. In 1999, the college established off-campus internet access to all of the college's online databases and expanded the college's databases through cooperative agreements with Salisbury State University.

This past year, the college participated in two technology grants: Faculty Technology Grant and the Faculty Online Technology Training Grant. The Faculty Technology Grant was used to assist faculty with technology in the classroom. The Faculty Online Technology Training Grant allowed for two faculty fellows to learn to develop online courses, train and mentor other faculty, and develop online courses. To assist faculty to support these goals, in the fall of 2000, all of the full-time faculty were given new computers (either laptop or desktop).

A distance learning committee was established with the function being to coordinate technology training on campus for faculty and to support the development of distance education courses. A schedule of training for faculty, based on input from the faculty, for FY '01 was established. The committee also developed the college's *Distance Learning Policies and Procedures* guidelines to assist with the advancement of quality distance learning courses on campus.

With impetus from the college's administrators and the diligent work of the instructional technologist, the college's web site http://www.worwic.cc.md.us/ was completely redesigned and activated in January 2001. The web site now contains web pages for full-time faculty. By June 2001, all of the faculty web pages will be completed. Departmental web pages were activated in May 2001. Furthermore, to assist students taking distance learning courses, the instructional technologist developed two online tutorials: a distance education orientation http://www.worwic.cc.md.us/Distance_Education/de_orientation.htm and a media center tutorial WWCC Media Center Tutorial.